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ABSTRACT

This document explains the process by which the J. M. Foundation selected vocational programs for the disabled that would be designated as "excellent" and describes the programs selected. Applications for the designation were evaluated on benefits to clients, program productivity, client severity, and the quality of materials included with the applications. In the community-based supported work category, the award winner was THE CENTER for the Rehabilitation and Training of the Disabled, Chicago. In the facility-based work adjustment category, the award winner was the Goodwill Industries of Broward County, Inc., Fort Lauderdale, Florida. In the long-term sheltered employment category, the award winner was the Opportunity Center, Inc., Wilmington, Delaware. In the Occupational Skill Training category, the award winner was Rise, Inc., Spring Lake Park, Minnesota. Finalists for awards were as follows: Individual Development Center, Wichita Falls, Texas; PACE Training and Evaluation Center, Inc., Star City, West Virginia; Washington County Mental Health Services, Inc., Barre, Vermont; Laurel Hill Center, Eugene, Oregon; Tri-County Industries, Inc., Rocky Mount, North Carolina; Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida, Inc., North Fort Meyers; St. Paul Rehabilitation Center, Inc., Minnesota; Abilities, Inc. of Florida Rehabilitation Center, Clearwater; and International Center for the Disabled, New York City. The document concludes with a summary of significant findings from the exemplary programs. (CML)

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THE J. M. FOUNDATION

1986 NATIONAL AWARDS

FOR EXCELLENCE IN

VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

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THE J. M. FOUNDATION

1986 NATIONAL AWARDS

FOR EXCELLENCE IN

VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Learning from the Best...

THE CENTER for the Rehabilitation and Training of the Disabled

Goodwill Industries of Broward County, Inc.

Opportunity Center, Inc.

Rise, Incorporated

Under a picture of Jeremiah Milbank, Founder of The J. M. Foundation and the ICD – International Center for the Disabled, two employees of the ICD proudly display the specially designed awards that were presented to winners and finalists.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the President / 5

Acknowledgements / 7

History and Description of the Search for Excellence / 9

Community-Based Supported Work: / 15
Award Winner – THE CENTER for the Rehabilitation and Training of the Disabled, Chicago, Illinois / 19
Finalist: Individual Development Center / 26
Finalist: PACE Training and Evaluation Center / 27
Finalist: Washington County Mental Health Services, Inc. / 28

Facility-Based Work Adjustment: / 29
Award Winner – Goodwill Industries of Broward County, Inc. Fort Lauderdale, Florida / 31
Finalist: Laurel Hill Center / 40
Finalist: Tri-County Industries, Inc. / 41

Long-Term Sheltered Employment: / 43
Award Winner – Opportunity Center, Inc. Wilmington, Delaware / 47
Finalist: Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida, Inc. / 55
Finalist: St. Paul Rehabilitation Center, Inc. / 56

Occupational Skill Training: / 57
Award Winner – Rise, Inc., Spring Lake Park, Minnesota / 59
Finalist: Abilities, Inc. of Florida Rehabilitation Center / 68
Finalist: ICD – International Center for the Disabled / 69

Significant Findings / 71

The 1987 Search for Excellence / 79

About The J. M. Foundation / 80

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleague:

Just last year, I announced *The J. M. Foundation National Awards for Excellence in Vocational Programs* – a new initiative to recognize and reward America's best vocational services. On behalf of The J. M. Foundation Directors, I could not be more pleased at the response to the *First Annual Search for Excellence* from our colleagues in the field. Significantly, we received several times more applications than anticipated, some 320 from 49 states.

With the help and guidance of many outstanding people including Vice President George Bush, my fellow judges, our National Advisory Committee, Walker and Associates, and my staff at The J. M. Foundation, we have awarded $20,000 to the winning programs in Community-Based Supported Work, Facility-Based Work Adjustment, Long-Term Sheltered Employment, and Occupational Skill Training. It is now time to complete perhaps the most important part of our Search process. There is an old Spanish proverb which states, "What good that you know unless others know?" In publishing this overview of *1986 Search* winners and finalists, we hope to inspire all providers of vocational services to strive for excellence.

No two facilities are identical, but our award-winning programs clearly demonstrate the benefits of good people in key positions, fiscal responsibility, a concern for standards, cooperation with the community, and responsiveness to individual needs. The pursuit of excellence is deeply rooted in our national heritage, but there has never been a better opportunity for vocational professionals to learn from the best in their field. According to *The ICD Survey of Disabled Americans: Bringing Disabled Americans into the Mainstream*, by Louis Harris and Associates in collaboration with the ICD-International Center for the Disabled and the National Council on the Handicapped, "Not working is perhaps the truest definition of what it means to be disabled: two-thirds of all disabled Americans between the age of 16 and 64 are not working."

I urge you to carefully review the Search process, the description of winners and finalists and, most importantly, the final section on "*Significant Findings.*" This publication will be widely distributed to government officials, private grantmakers, rehabilitation professionals, and anyone who shares our interest in helping persons with disabilities find meaningful careers. The astonishing disparity of performance outcomes between the highest and lowest ranked programs clearly indicates that there is much we can learn from exemplary facilities. Together, we can show the way.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely,

Jeremiah Milbank, Jr.
President
The J. M. Foundation
April 15, 1987

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The J.M. Foundation would like to recognize the following organizations and individuals who contributed so substantially to the first national Awards for Excellence in Vocational Programs. Their assistance was invaluable and the 1986 Search could not have succeeded without their help.

Members of the National Advisory Committee that provided ideas and inspiration to the Search for Excellence are:

Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities;
Alan Toppel, Executive Director

Goodwill Industries of America; David Cooney, President

ICD-International Center for the Disabled;
John Wingate, Executive Director

Iowa Association of Rehabilitation and Residential Facilities;
Sharon Geers Wulf, Executive Director

The J. M. Foundation; Jack Brauntuch, Executive Director

National Association of Jewish Vocational Services;
Harvey Goldman, Executive Director

National Association of Rehabilitation Facilities;
John Doyle, Executive Director;
James Ansley, Deputy Executive Director

The National Easter Seal Society;
James Williams, Deputy Executive Director

Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission;
Terry Etling, Assistant Commissioner

Rehabilitation Services Administration;
Justin Dart, Commissioner

United Cerebral Palsy Association; John Siepp, Program Director

A blue-ribbon panel of judges headed by Jeremiah Milbank, Jr., President of The J. M. Foundation, selected the award winners and diligently reviewed each of the finalists. Panel members included:

Dr. Jean K. Elder, Assistant Secretary Designate for Human Services, Department of Health and Human Services;

Professor Douglas A. Fenderson, University of Minnesota Medical School;

Paul G. Hearne, Executive Director, Just One Break, Inc.;

Edward J. O'Malley, Personnel Director, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

The J. M. Foundation also wishes to extend its appreciation to Robert A. Walker and Gary Prazak of Walker and Associates, Inc., our consultants who developed the Search process and provided staff support and program coordination. They, along with Chris Olander, Senior Program Officer at the Foundation, are the authors of this publication. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the many rehabilitation facilities throughout the country that prepared and submitted applications for the 1986 Search. Because of their enthusiasm and commitment to excellence, The J. M. Foundation Directors have renewed the Awards for a second year in 1987.

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE

Although vocational programs have a long and rich history of providing services to persons with disabilities, very little is known about which programs are the nation's best. A number of years ago The J. M. Foundation decided that vocational programs for the disabled would be well served if it were possible to objectively define "excellence" and reward those organizations that stand apart from all others. Defining excellence and identifying exemplary organizations are important for several reasons:

- Defining excellence provides a standard of achievement for individuals, programs, and facilities.
- Being able to measure quality means that it can be rewarded so that others will be encouraged to achieve it.
- The identification of quality programs promotes the study of excellence and replication of exemplary programs.

The "Search for Excellence" is one in a long line of J. M. Foundation initiatives to improve the lives of persons with disabilities. For over sixty years, the Foundation and its Directors have supported exemplary programs in health and rehabilitation. The first National Search is the result of over three years of research, program design, and field tests. In 1982, the consulting firm of Walker and Associates in Minneapolis was selected to assist the Foundation because of its extensive experience in measuring the performance of rehabilitation facilities. After reviewing the literature on excellence and previous recognition efforts, it was found that award programs were relatively common. However, such awards often limited eligibility, lacked objective standards for organizational assessment, and failed to encourage excellence through the dissemination of exemplary practices.

In the Fall of 1982, a dozen outstanding rehabilitation leaders were convened to review the "state of the art" in awards and design a model Search process. Conference participants suggested a new methodology which would focus on assessing client benefits rather than the quality of services or the characteristics of administrators

in facilities. Based on their recommendations, a field test took place in several states. Among the most significant findings of this multi-state test were:

- Excellence is best assessed by measuring the benefits that clients receive, the severity level of the persons served, and the productivity or efficiency of services provided.
- Excellence is not a concept that is easily applied to an entire facility. If facilities are to be compared to each other using objective measures, it is necessary to examine similar programs instead of services or the facility as a whole.
- Excellence should be measured so that exemplary programs can be objectively identified. The Search process must have credibility to encourage applications and enhance the value of winning.
- Excellence is facilitated when many organizations participate. National recognition of award winners and dissemination of information on exemplary programs is vital.

After nearly three years of field testing, a National Advisory Committee was constituted to develop guidelines for the first National Search for Excellence. The Committee recommended that The J. M. Foundation conduct a Search in not-for-profit organizations that serve persons with disabilities in the following four program categories: *Community-Based Supported Work, Facility-Based Work Adjustment, Long-Term Sheltered Employment,* and *Occupational Skill Training.* An application form consisting of from eight to ten measures was developed for each program. These measures were derived from a master list of over fifteen goals that theoretically could be achieved by the four programs.

Excellence was objectively measured in the following areas:

- *Benefits to clients:* The quality of benefits that clients received was considered to be the most important indicator of excellence. Because of differences among the programs, two types of client benefits were considered, those that the clients received while in the program and those that were obtained by clients following program services. Examples of specific benefit measures include: percentage of clients obtaining competitive employment, earnings while in the facility, fringe benefits received, percent of time worked, and others.
- *Program productivity:* The efficient use of time and money were considered important conditions of excellence but not nearly as crucial as client benefits. Each program category had two productivity measures that were based on inputs of staff time or program dollars compared to outputs such as client days of service or number of persons served.

- *Client severity:* Studies show that the severity level of clients has some effect on the results that employment programs obtain. A literature review helped to identify eight client conditions such as chronic mental illness, institutionalization, or under age twenty-two which have been found to affect employment benefits. These conditions were used to measure the severity level of the clients served in vocational programs.
- *Attachments:* This category rated the quality of materials that were included with the applications. All applicants were asked to submit copies of their databases and samples of management reports. Some program specific attachments were also requested. For example, skill training programs were asked to send samples of curriculum materials. These factors contributed less than 10% to the total index score.

PUBLICIZING THE SEARCH

Applications were mailed to some 3,500 organizations that were believed to provide one or more of the four Search programs. In addition to direct service providers, application materials were also sent to state associations and Federal, state and local officials. Several national organizations forwarded applications to their members and announced the program through local affiliates.

HOW APPLICATIONS WERE PROCESSED

Each application received by Walker and Associates was screened for accuracy and completeness and a determination was made whether or not the applicant represented an eligible organization and program. Some applicants were found to be ineligible because they did not meet the program definitions or were governmental rather than private non-profit agencies.

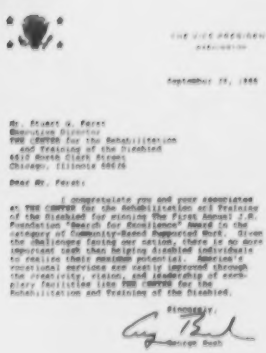
HOW AN EXCELLENCE SCORE WAS OBTAINED

Information from applications that survived this initial screening was entered into a computer. Scores for each applicant were obtained by performing calculations for each measure (such as the percentage of clients who obtained a job) and by converting the results into index scores where 100 is considered average. These index scores were then weighted in terms of importance and grouped together in four categories such as "benefits to clients" so that an index score would reflect how well each applicant did on a variety of measures. Finally, scores on the four major categories of excellence (benefits, productivity, client severity, attachments) were again weighted and combined so that overall excellence could be represented by a single score.

An important consideration in the weights was to avoid penalizing programs that served clients with particularly severe conditions. This was accomplished by varying the weights or values of the measure of client severity, thereby increasing a program's overall excellence index score if it served clients with a higher than average number of severe conditions and lowering the index score if the program served clients who had fewer problems.

The computer then rank ordered all of the applications within a program category by this single score of overall excellence. An applicant that scored average on all of the measures in its program category would have an excellence score of 100, while others might range above and below the "average." In work adjustment, for example, the highest ranked facility had an excellence index score of 141 while the lowest ranked applicant scored 55.

During a special ceremony at The White House, Vice President George Bush presents a "Search for Excellence" award and a $20,000 J. M. Foundation check to Mr. Tony Schreiner, Chairman, Rise, Inc. (R), winner in the category of Occupational Skill Training.



THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

September 19, 1986

Mr. Stuart A. Forst
Executive Director
THE CENTER for the Rehabilitation
and Training of the Disabled
6610 North Clark Street
Chicago, Illinois 60626

Dear Mr. Forst:

I congratulate you and your associates at THE CENTER for the Rehabilitation and Training of the Disabled for winning the First Annual J.M. Foundation "Search for Excellence" Award in the category of Community-Based Supported Work. Given the challenges facing our nation, there is no more important task than helping disabled individuals to realize their maximum potential. America's vocational services are ready to improved through the creativity, vision, and leadership of exemplary facilities like THE CENTER for the Rehabilitation and Training of the Disabled.

Sincerely,

George Bush

Search winners including THE CENTER (above) received a personal letter of congratulations from the Vice President.

Jeremiah Milbank, Jr., President, The J. M. Foundation (L), congratulates representatives from winning facilities (L-R): John Barrett, Executive Director, Rise, Inc.; Stuart Ferst, Executive Director, THE CENTER for the Rehabilitation and Training of the Disabled; Eugene Grimm, Immediate Past President, Opportunity Center, Inc.; Martin Brozosky, President, THE CENTER for the Rehabilitation and Training of the Disabled; Ronald Stroud, Executive Director, Opportunity Center, Inc.; Robert Galinis, Executive Director, and Steven Fleisch, Deputy Director, Goodwill Industries of Broward County.

SELECTING THE FINALISTS

Several applicants at the top of each program category were identified as possible finalists and were asked to confirm the accuracy of their data by supplying additional information. Among other things, they were required to send a list of all clients who completed the program, as well as the dates and types of individual outcomes. Significant errors were found in approximately half of the potential finalists. After revised applications and corrected data were received, they were re-entered into the computer and again rank ordered.

Once the top three or four finalists in each program category were validated, each was re-contacted to provide descriptive information for the judges to review about the organization and the particular program. Individuals whose names were supplied by the applicants, such as referral sources, advocates, and administrators of other vocational programs were phone interviewed about the applicant's program. Interviews were also held with additional persons whose names were not on the applicant's list.

FINAL SELECTION

In August 1986, the panel of judges met in New York City to select the award winner and confirm the finalists in each program category. The meeting was chaired by Jeremiah Milbank, Jr., President of The J. M. Foundation, and included staff from The J. M. Foundation and Walker and Associates. Judges were provided with a thorough summary of the top ranked finalists in each category, including: computer-generated index scores, comparisons with other applicants, application forms, and supporting documents. Summaries of each facility and comments made by community respondents were also available. Although only one $20,000 award could be made in each category, the top ranked programs were so closely matched that the judges decided to acknowledge finalists with a special plaque and a written description in the 1986 Search Monograph.

At a luncheon reception for 1986 Search winners, Jeremiah Milbank, Jr., President of The J. M. Foundation (R), greets fellow judges from the awards selection committee (L-R): Edward J. O'Malley, Personnel Director, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey; Dr. Jean K. Elder, Assistant Secretary Designate for Human Services, Department of Health and Human Services; Paul G. Hearne, Executive Director, Just One Break, Inc. (Not shown: Professor Douglas A. Fenderson, University of Minnesota Medical School).

AWARD PRESENTATIONS

On September 29, 1986 at a ceremony held in the White House, Vice President George Bush presented each of the four winners a check for $20,000 and an award created especially for the first annual Search. A luncheon reception hosted by Jeremiah Milbank, Jr. and Foundation staff followed the formal presentation ceremony. In attendance were members of the National Advisory Committee, Judges Panel, National Council on the Handicapped, National Organization on Disability, Walker and Associates, and representatives of several national organizations serving handicapped Americans.

COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORTED WORK

AWARD WINNER AND FINALISTS

THE CENTER for the Rehabilitation and Training of the Disabled

Individual Development Center

PACE Training and Evaluation Center

Washington County Mental Health Services, Inc.

Introduction

Community-based supported work programs are among the newest vocational rehabilitation programs for people with severe disabilities. They provide opportunities for individuals who are unable to get or keep regular competitive employment to earn wages while working in the community. Supervision, training, and on-going support services to help clients maintain their jobs are usually provided by program staff at the work site.

Supported work can be provided through work crews (e.g., janitorial crews working in office buildings), enclaves (e.g., a group of clients working together on a food service), or individual placements with several employers at a variety of sites. Some clients may earn less than the prevailing wage and are covered by a Department of Labor Sheltered Employment Certificate, while other clients may earn at or above the prevailing wage. Workers can also be paid directly by the employer for whom the work is being done or by the rehabilitation agency. For many people, supported work is considered an alternative to sheltered employment provided in a facility setting. While earning an income in the community, disabled clients usually have the opportunity to interact with non-disabled co-workers. Some people in these programs will move on to regular competitive jobs, but many clients continue to work in supported work programs for several years. Programs which limited the length of a client's participation or that used community work sites primarily for short-term work experience were not eligible in this category.

Eleven performance measures in five categories were used to determine excellence. The categories, measures, and values or weights assigned to each are shown below.

HOW EXCELLENCE WAS MEASURED

Categories and Measures	Point Values	
	Categories	Measures
1. *Benefits to Current Clients*	50 Points	
a. Percent of time on paid work		65 Points
b. Average hourly earnings		25 Points
c. Annual $ value of fringe benefits		10 Points
2. *Benefits to Former Clients*	10 Points	
a. Percent competitively employed		65 Points
b. Percent in skill training		25 Points
c. Average weekly earnings in employment		10 Points
3. *Productivity*	20 Points	
a. Client hours of paid work per staff hour		50 Points
b. Client earnings per $1 of program cost		50 Points
4. *Client Severity*	15 Points	
a. Average number of severe conditions		100 Points
5. *Attachments*	5 Points	
a. Quality of data base		50 Points
b. Quality of "why exemplary" explanation		50 Points

A total of 135 applications representing 43 states were submitted by community-based supported work programs, more than any other program category. Seven states were represented by five or more applications.

The average applicant program (using median values) provides 19 hours of work per week for their clients, earnings of $3.25 per hour, and annual fringe benefits worth $207 (paid time off and health insurance). The average program cost to maintain one person for a year was $6,128. For every dollar of program cost, clients in the average program earned 45¢.

Clients of THE CENTER earn excellent wages and fringe benefits while learning office cleaning and other janitorial duties.

AWARD WINNER

THE CENTER FOR REHABILITATION AND TRAINING OF THE DISABLED

Chicago, Illinois

A CENTER client prepares the floor for waxing at a participating Contract Janitorial Site.

THE FACILITY

THE CENTER for Rehabilitation and Training of the Disabled in Chicago is one of the oldest and largest rehabilitation facilities in the country. Currently it has an annual budget of $8.2 million and a staff of about 250. The agency's roots go back to 1919 when a group of Russian Jewish immigrants started a day nursery to serve children of working parents. In 1956 it became the Chicago School for Retarded Children and in 1959 it added a workshop for adults with mental retardation. In the 1970s residential programs were added and local business work sites for on-the-job training were first utilized for clients. The name of the organization was again changed in 1979 to Chicago Services for Work and Rehabilitation. Since 1980 the annual budget has grown rapidly, doubling in just five years. In 1983, the name was finally changed to THE CENTER for Rehabilitation and Training of the Disabled to reflect the broad scope of people served and types of programs provided.

THE CENTER's comprehensive scope and philosophy of operation are well summarized in its mission statement:

> "THE CENTER will provide vocational evaluation, vocational training, personal adjustment instruction, residential services, independent living training, and in-home support services to disabled persons. Each service is designed to enable developmentally, physically, and mentally disabled persons to achieve maximum economic and social well-being in the least restrictive manner. Additionally, THE CENTER will promote social change directed at improving the quality of life for disabled individuals."

PROGRAMS OF THE CENTER

THE CENTER operates 35 programs in 15 different locations including: Assessment Services, Communicative Disorder Programs, Special Emphasis Programs (such as behavioral management programs for children and adults with severe behavior problems), Vocational Programs (work activity, occupational skill training, sheltered employment, a micrographics operation, transitional employment, and the community-based supported work program that won the award), and Residential Programs for the mentally ill, mentally retarded, blind, deaf, and physically disabled. These comprehensive services provide support which enables disabled

people to live as independently as possible in the community. In total, THE CENTER serves over 800 people every day and over 1,300 people annually.

BOARD AND STAFF

Despite the difficulties inherent in operating a wide variety of programs at different locations, the administration has fostered a clear understanding of THE CENTER's mission throughout the organization. While the overall annual turnover of all staff is about 20%, it is very low for key administrators, managers, and supervisors.

The Board of Directors includes strong representation from the business community. The chairpersons for each of eight committees also serve as Vice Presidents of the Board, and all members serve on a committee. The Board has long historical ties with the agency; some members are children of THE CENTER's original Trustees. In the last several years, a number of new people have been added who bring particularly useful technical expertise to the organization. The current Board includes professionals in law, education, rehabilitation, advertising, accounting, architecture, safety, insurance, public relations, business planning, and management. Trustees have actively encouraged and facilitated the recent dramatic growth of THE CENTER and broadened its mission to include a wide range of programs serving people with many different disabilities. Through THE CENTER's program evaluation system, the Board monitors program performance and holds each program accountable for achievement and economic viability.

In 1985, THE CENTER established an Employer Advisory Committee to better meet the vocational needs of clients and to provide guidance in planning and marketing. The thirteen member Committee meets every other month and is structured into three active sub-committees that meet monthly. The first sub-committee focuses on *future training*, providing advice and guidance regarding the most promising occupational opportunities for new training programs. This group was instrumental in starting THE CENTER's most recent training area for nursing assistants. The second sub-committee of employers conducts *simulated job interviews* with CENTER clients to help them prepare for seeking employment. The third sub-committee, which concentrates on *publicity and marketing*, facilitates outreach to business and industry in the Chicago area. This helps to generate contracts (for both sheltered employment and supported work) and to open doors for competitive employment opportunities. To involve the business community as much as possible, THE CENTER also conducts quarterly information meetings for current and prospective employers.

THE AWARD-WINNING COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORTED WORK PROGRAM

THE CENTER's supported work program, called the Contract Janitorial Program, has grown steadily since its inauguration in 1981. The first contract was obtained through NISH (National Industries for the Severely Handicapped), which helps rehabilitation facilities locate and negotiate contract work for various units of the Federal government. Under the Javits, Wagner, O'Day Act, non-profit organizations have priority bidding status on certain Federal contracts. The first CENTER contract was for two janitorial workers at the OSHA Training Center in Des Plaines, Illinois.

The program expanded a year later with a contract for nine workers at the U.S. Post Office facility in Forest Park and again the next year with a contract for 20 workers at the U.S. Customs House in Chicago. The State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency provided funds for a full-time job coach for this larger site which enabled the program to provide employment for persons who needed more intensive supervision.

In August 1985, THE CENTER's largest contract provided work for 50 disabled people at the Dirksen Federal Building. In order to recruit suitable workers for this site, THE CENTER joined forces with four other rehabilitation organizations in the Chicago area and created a consortium called "JanTech." The resulting organization is jointly governed and operated by THE CENTER, the Chicago Association for Retarded Citizens, the Human Resources Development Institute, Jewish Vocational Services and Thresholds. All five agencies have clients working in the program. In a field which is often characterized by protection of "turf," JanTech is an unusual and outstanding example of collaboration between rehabilitation organizations. The contract janitorial program now serves a daily total of 90 clients at five Federal agencies and one state office building. One of the sites is also used to provide short-term transitional employment for ten clients. Significantly, the program has considerable potential to expand, offering more on-going job opportunities for handicapped persons.

THE CENTER's contract janitorial service is marketed to the community as "Chicago Janitorial Services." It has a staff of 12 people (ten full-time equivalents), including two managers, two assistant managers, and eight crew chiefs. The program generates about six hours of paid client work for each hour of staff time. This compares to an average of 3.2 client hours per staff hour for all applicants in the Search. Staff responsible for on-the-job client supervision have extensive experience in the janitorial business rather than in traditional rehabilitation settings. They are required to have a minimum of six years of supervisory experience in building

maintenance. Other support services, such as personal counseling, are provided as needed by appropriate CENTER staff.

Each of the Federal work sites is subject to daily inspection to assure consistently high quality work. At one site some of the inspectors are the same people who performed similar duties before the contract was awarded to THE CENTER. Citations for not meeting strict performance standards (such as water spots on a sink or dust on a file cabinet) are very rare. The program's exceptional quality has also been recognized by NISH which presented its "Certificate of Achievement" award to THE CENTER. About 90% of direct labor hours are provided by persons who meet the Federal definition of "severely handicapped." This substantially exceeds the minimum required percentage of 75% handicapped workers.

Clients in the supported work program have a variety of disabling conditions. About one-third are diagnosed as mentally retarded, one-third have mental illness and the remaining one-third have various physical and sensory disabilities including profound deafness. Many workers have multiple disabilities. Typically, clients in this program are initially referred to THE CENTER or to one of the other participating facilities by the Illinois Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Most clients undergo a comprehensive intake and evaluation process. Many have also previously participated in work adjustment or other vocational programs.

Before they are accepted for the program, participants receive basic training in building maintenance either at THE CENTER or another rehabilitation facility. Every client is personally contacted by a case manager on a weekly basis to identify and discuss job-related problems. Staffings on each client are held at least every six months to review progress and needs. Wage evaluations are completed every three months to determine productivity levels and hourly wage rates. Most clients are working at between 60% and 100% of full competitive standards. The on-site work is all done during daytime hours, providing ample opportunity for contact with other employees and the general public.

The jobs in this program pay very well. For example, in October 1985, the average earnings for the month were just over $1,000 per client. The average hourly rate is over $7 per hour, while the maximum pay is $8 per hour. This compares to an average wage of $3.25 per hour for all programs in this category. Total payroll is over $750,000 per year and fringe benefits include ten paid holidays and five days of paid vacation after one year, up to 15 days of sick leave, and a $.32 hourly allowance for health insurance. The annual dollar value of fringe benefits is over twice the average for all applicants in supported work. Staff believe that earnings and benefits are probably better than most clients would get in regular competitive employment.

While the program is designed to provide long-term employment, some clients improve in productivity and require less and less special supervision and support. Consequently, they are then able to work in a non-supported setting. During a recent twelve-month period, 18 people left the program for various reasons. Of these, ten went into regular competitive employment as janitors or housekeepers and two entered occupational skill training programs. Despite the high level of pay in the program, most workers are eager to move into regular jobs whenever possible, even if that means a cut in pay. Staff encourage clients to risk leaving the security of the program for competitive employment. If a person is unable to succeed in a regular job, he or she can return to supported work, although this has rarely been necessary.

WHAT MAKES THIS PROGRAM EXEMPLARY?

The Contract Janitorial Program, THE CENTER's supported work program, is exemplary largely because it is part of an outstanding rehabilitation facility. The entire organization, from Board and top administrators to the staff who run the wide range of service programs, is infused with a positive vision that expects and gets a high level of performance.

THE CENTER is rapidly expanding at a time when many other providers of rehabilitation services are struggling to survive. The annual budget has nearly doubled in the past five years. By starting new programs and expanding old ones, THE CENTER has substantially increased its share of the rehabilitation market. Together, Board and staff work to identify needs and show imagination and resolve in creating effective programs to meet those needs. Potential opportunities are carefully explored, but when appropriate, THE CENTER boldly commits staff and financial resources as necessary to succeed. To build a broad base of financial support, the organization has become particularly resourceful in tapping a wide range of funding sources, creative in its use of state and Federal money, and successful in obtaining special grant awards.

THE CENTER's management sets clear direction and expectations and reinforces achievement. Program performance is closely monitored through imaginative use of a comprehensive and effective program evaluation system. Board and staff review performance reports on a regular basis to recognize positive trends as well as to identify problems. Salary increases of managers are linked to the achievement of program goals. Experienced staff are retained by opportunities for training and professional development, competitive salaries and benefits, and an exciting environment where innovation is encouraged by both the Board and administration.

In summary, the exemplary performance of this supported work program results from a facility-wide commitment to employers and handicapped workers, an experienced staff that gets strong support and direction from the administration, and a dynamic Board which has the flexibility and resourcefulness to meet the challenges of an ever changing market.

For further information on this award-winning program, contact:
Stuart G. Ferst, Executive Director, or
James S. Lundstrom, Associate Executive Director
THE CENTER for the Rehabilitation and Training of the Disabled
6610 North Clark Street
Chicago, Illinois 60626
Telephone: (312) 973-7900

COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORTED WORK FINALISTS

An IDC supervisor (L) discusses work schedules with a supported-work crew member performing roadway maintenance.

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER, INC.

IDC's supported work program began in 1981 and operates under three separate contracts. The two largest are with Sheppard Air Force base and provide jobs for 220 handicapped workers in food service and stock work. The third contract is with the City of Wichita Falls which provides work for ten clients on work crews doing roadway clean-up. Together, the Air Force and City government contracts provide a wide range of jobs that have significant opportunities for advancement.

The largest number of clients served in this program have mental health problems, others have mental retardation, learning disabilities or physical impairments. To accommodate individual needs for services, jobs are held for clients who are occasionally hospitalized for treatment. Non-vocational support services are provided directly by Center staff and through arrangements with various community agencies.

Hourly wages in 1985 averaged $4.80 and ranged from $1.89 to over $8.00. Clients typically work about 32 hours a week and earn approximately $720 per month. Fringe benefits for those working at the air base include 25 days of paid vacation, holidays and sick leave, and an allowance for health insurance. IDC has been formally recognized in the state and region as an outstanding provider of services and jobs for handicapped persons.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:
James Cardin, Vice President for Human Resources, or
Ray Nasypany, Director of Personnel
Individual Development Center, Inc. (IDC)
3401 Armory Road, Wichita Falls, TX 76302
Telephone: (817) 766-3207

Under a contract with the U.S. Department of Energy, The Center's program provides jobs in janitorial services, as well as groundskeeping and mail work.

PACE TRAINING AND EVALUATION CENTER, INC.

The PACE Center is located in the Morgantown, West Virginia area. In addition to the supported work program, it provides work adjustment, sheltered employment, and training of school-age special education students. The Center's annual budget is about $770,000.

The supported work program started eight years ago and has steadily grown to its current daily capacity of 30 clients. It is one of the oldest and largest supported work programs in West Virginia and has served to encourage others in the State to develop similar initiatives.

The Center's program provides jobs under contract with the U.S. Department of Energy for janitorial services, groundskeeping and mail service at the Morgantown Energy Technology Center. The program is financially self-sustaining, with the contracts covering all wages to clients and staff. It has a staff of 3.2 full time equivalents and an annual budget of $94,000 plus client wages. Clients work essentially full-time and earn an average of $6.22 per hour, or over $1,000 a month. Most of the participants are mentally retarded, although services may be expanded to include people with chronic mental illness. The PACE Center is regarded by both purchasers of services and other rehabilitation professionals as one of the strongest facilities in the State and a recognized leader in community-based supported work.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:
George Demanelis, Executive Director
PACE Training and Evaluation Center, Inc.
P.O. Box 4241 Star City, WV 26504
Telephone: (304) 599-0513

With support from Project Transition supervisor Ken Bissonnette, (R) a client performs building maintenance duties for a private firm in Vermont's capitol, Montpelier.

WASHINGTON COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, INC.

Project Transition began in 1980 and has been a prototype for several similar programs in Vermont. The county it serves has a population of only 57,000. It is the only finalist in this year's Search that provides work through individual placements with a number of employers rather than utilizing work crews or enclaves. The program maintains particularly complete documentation describing the clients served, services received, and results achieved. It has a staff of 3.25 full time equivalents, an annual budget of just over $80,000, and currently serves 27 clients. Skill training specific to each job is provided by program staff on the job site.

All of the clients are mentally retarded and most have never worked before. Jobs are primarily service related and include kitchen work, dishwashing, stock clerk, motel room cleaning, factory work, and veterinary aide. Clients earn at least the prevailing minimum wages and their monthly earnings average about $400.

Seven of the fifteen clients closed from this program by the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency during the past year are competitively employed with average weekly earnings of $108. However, they will continue to receive follow-up contacts at least once a month by program staff for an indefinite period and are provided additional training or other services as needed. The staff of the program are described by others as hard-working and enthusiastic, providing highly individualized services resulting in a superior rate of job retention. The program has earned the respect of the business community and other professionals throughout the region.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:
William Ashe, Director of Adult Developmental Disabilities Programs
Washington County Mental Health Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 462, Barre, VT 05641
Telephone: (802) 479-2502

FACILITY-BASED

WORK ADJUSTMENT

AWARD WINNER AND FINALISTS

Goodwill Industries of Broward County, Inc.

Laurel Hill Center

Tri-County Industries, Inc.

Introduction

Facility-based work adjustment programs serve persons with disabilities who have problems such as poor work habits, limited motivation, and low productivity. The primary goal of the program is competitive employment. The program is time-limited and the majority of services are provided within the facility. Persons served have a wide range of disabling conditions and are provided services such as counseling, work experience, and job placement.

Eight performance measures grouped in four categories were used as indicators of excellence. The categories, measures, and values or weights assigned to each are shown below.

HOW EXCELLENCE WAS MEASURED

Categories and Measures	Point Values	
	Categories	Measures
1. *Benefits to Clients*	60 Points	
a. Job entry rate		70 Points
b. % receiving advanced training		20 Points
c. Weekly earnings		10 Points
2. *Productivity*	20 Points	
a. Cost per client day		50 Points
b. Staff days to client days		50 Points
3. *Client Severity*	15 Points	
a. Average number of severe conditions		100 Points
4. *Attachments*	5 Points	
a. Quality of database		50 Points
b. Quality of "why exemplary" explanation		50 Points

A total of 65 applications for work adjustment were received in the first annual Search for Excellence. The average applicant had a job entry rate of 23% and an additional 8% of persons served entered skill training following work adjustment services. The programs tend to serve young persons with no work history who have conditions such as chronic mental illness, mental retardation, and severe physical disabilities. The average program spent over $11,000 to get a client a competitive job which was at or near the minimum wage.

AWARD WINNER

GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF BROWARD COUNTY, INC.

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Shirley Smolenak, Program Supervisor (R), assists a client who is learning how to use a cash register at the Goodwill Dollar Store.

Jerry Hackett, Skills Instructor (L), works with client on a "shrink-wrap" operation for electronic components.

THE FACILITY

Excellence can be found in even the most modest of facilities. At Goodwill of Broward County, work adjustment services are provided in an unassuming 12,000 square foot building which was originally built as a bowling alley. The limited space has been creatively converted into offices and program areas, often using metal shelves as dividers rather than panelled walls. Yet within this setting persons with severe disabilities participate in a competitive employment program which results in clients getting jobs at a rate of over 40% and a cost to the community which is 25% less than the average "Search" applicant. At Goodwill, the emphasis is on understanding individual needs and developing appropriate client behaviors. By focusing on essential work behaviors, staff and clients work together to produce superior results. A few features of this effective program are group behavioral boards to track individual client progress, widely shared, hard-hitting evaluation reports, and "Worker of the Week" awards with cash prizes.

THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Goodwill Industries of Broward County, Inc. is located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, serving a county population of 1.3 million persons in an area which is experiencing a growth rate of about two percent a year. The unemployment rate is currently under 4% and has been below the national average for several years. The labor market has a variety of opportunities with jobs readily available in the light manufacturing and service industries. Clients with appropriate skills are sometimes able to choose between more than one job offer.

There are few facilities within the county which offer vocationally related services. With the exception of a work activity program at the Association of Retarded Citizens, Broward Goodwill is the sole provider of facility-based employability services for persons with disabilities. There are, however, several organizations in the county that offer much needed support services for individuals served by Goodwill. Unlike many communities, there are no sheltered workshops in Broward County. This lack of sheltered opportunities has influenced Goodwill's heavy emphasis on placement into competitive employment.

A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF BROWARD GOODWILL

In 1973, Goodwill of South Florida in Miami was approached to take over an organization which was in crisis due to fiscal and program mismanagement. For six years, Broward Goodwill was operated as a branch of the larger, well-established Goodwill of

South Florida. An Advisory Board was recruited which later served as the nucleus of Broward's Board when it became an independent Goodwill facility in 1979. Many of these original Directors are still active on the Board's Executive Committee. The current Executive Director and several key staff also came from Goodwill of South Florida and helped to design the vocational adjustment training program which has been operating since the facility opened seven years ago.

With an annual operating budget of $1.3 million, Broward Goodwill serves some 200 disabled persons each year in four vocationally-related programs. The facility also operates three stores, one of which is located at the work adjustment site. The four vocational service programs are:

- *Vocational Adjustment Training* (the facility's title for work adjustment), which served seventy persons during a recent program year.
- *Work Activities*, which has a daily census of sixty persons.
- *Transitional Employment*, a program which is just getting started and will develop skill training sites in the business community.
- *Work Assessment*, which includes several packaged work evaluation systems and will be fully operational in 1987.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The facility has a complement of nineteen Board members who describe themselves as working professionals rather than individuals of independent wealth. Many of the Directors have been with Broward County Goodwill since it was an affiliate of South Florida. They display an unusually high degree of interest in and knowledge of both programmatic and administrative issues.

While Board members are somewhat apologetic about their inability to raise large sums of money, they are justifiably proud of the role they have had in building the organization. Board members are involved in policy formation, but do not interfere in the day-to-day operations of the facility. They do, however, demand and routinely receive objective performance data which enables them to provide immediate feedback to staff when results are better (or worse) than expected. When asked why they are so concerned about outcome results, a long-time Board member stated, "winners like to keep score." The Board was quite disappointed when the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency discontinued publishing program results – results which showed that Broward Goodwill had consistently outperformed other facilities.

A CONSTANT SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE

Despite the exemplary quality of current programs, Broward Goodwill's long range plan demonstrates a continuing commitment to improved services.

Some examples from the strategic plan for 1986 include:

- Relationships with the community will be strengthened by requiring staff to join community organizations that contribute to the facility's excellence and by developing a semi-annual newsletter.
- Services to clients will be improved by requiring staff to obtain eight to ten hours of professional training, increasing by 33% the amount of contract work, developing a videotape library, and by expanding and improving skill training and vocational evaluation services.
- Revenues will be increased by providing store personnel with a bonus incentive plan, increasing the advertising budget, providing sales training to retail store personnel, and opening an additional outlet. Costs will be contained by computerizing many of the facility's operations.

Broward Goodwill commits itself publicly to a wide range of facility improvements on an annual basis. The "one year forward" plan contains goals that enhance the development of new programs, improve the quality of client services, reinforce relationships with the community, and make the facility more efficient. Board and staff are aware of the need to serve more people and discussions are now being held to consider alternative sites for building a new facility.

HOW THE VOCATIONAL ADJUSTMENT TRAINING PROGRAM WORKS

The goal of the program is competitive employment although lesser outcomes are also considered as positive benefits. Vocational Adjustment can serve 30 persons at a time and during a recent 12 month period a total of 70 persons were closed from the program. In 1985, the annual budget, not counting wages paid to clients, was approximately $265,000. Treatment services are provided by five key staff members; a Program Supervisor who leads the staff; a Social Worker who in addition to other duties provides job seeking skills training, a Skills Instructor, and two Adjustment Training Technicians, both of whom are responsible for setting up and supervising contract work.

The Vocational Adjustment Program includes a total of 27 services that are either provided by the program or can be obtained

from the community. Of these services, 16 are provided by facility staff. The program offers a variety of group experiences such as Social Skills, Job Seeking Skills, and Therapy Groups. Psychological and Psychiatric Consultation are also available as is Adult Basic Education.

A typical client participates over a period of 80 service days or four calendar months. The program serves primarily young people with limited work experience, most of whom have conditions such as mental illness, mental retardation, or severe physical disabilities. A significant number of clients are on public assistance and have previously been institutionalized. Clients in the Goodwill program have more disabling conditions which affect employment (2.5 vs. 1.75 severe conditions per client) than those served by other "Search" applicants. Referrals are obtained from the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency. Because the Agency contracts and pays for program capacity, the facility can more easily predict its annual income.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY VOCATIONAL ADJUSTMENT TRAINING

Every client follows an individual treatment plan which guides day-to-day services. Plans are shaped by a number of people including the Program Supervisor, representatives from the State VR Agency, and the client. Two types of plans are developed. The first is an Individual Adjustment Plan which describes the need for specific behavioral changes, while the second is a Group Behavior Plan which encompasses all clients and focuses on general work behaviors.

The Individual Adjustment Plan contains a description of the client's problem, the goals to be achieved, the process that will be followed, and the reinforcers to be applied. The plan format is also used to record client progress and is signed by a staff person. The client signs the plan under the statement, "I have helped write my adjustment plan, I understand it and will work toward its goals." In addition to the individual plan, each client has a Group Behavioral Plan which consists of ten areas felt to be important in getting and keeping a job such as staying on a task, accepting authority, and producing quality work. Under these areas are listed a total of 29 specific behaviors.

"Behavior" points for each client are earned on a daily basis and posted on a group behavior board. The board is prominently displayed so that every client can monitor his or her own progress and can compare accomplishments or difficulties with other members of the group. Depending on the number of points earned each week, clients are assigned to six different groups which are arranged in an ascending hierarchy. The first group is used to establish

baseline behaviors and is completed in two weeks. Participation in the last or highest group requires 461 points to enter (indicating a relatively high level of job readiness) and the goal of that group is to facilitate job placement services. In effect, the group process enables clients to understand the attitudes and behaviors that are important in keeping a job and provides a system of feedback and reward to encourage their adoption. This approach also provides staff with important monitoring information on client progress because the board displays data on how long it is taking to move up the hierarchy.

The status of each client is reviewed weekly in the offices of the State VR Agency and at Goodwill by the five principal program staff. The pace of the team meeting is fast and goal directed. Problems are identified, alternative solutions considered, consultant opinions sought, and new plans are then forged which become part of the client's written record.

A typical client day is difficult to describe since each person follows a program tailored to individual needs. Most clients spend only half a day on contract work. The remainder of their time is spent in work groups which meet early in the day, work sample simulations to assess specific job skills, counseling meetings with program staff, and a variety of group sessions involving topics such as money management, public transportation, and even relaxation training.

When the client's goals have been achieved (or will obviously not be achieved) the person is reviewed for discharge by program staff and community representatives. A discharge report is prepared which lists the vocational goal and recommendations for any additional services. To assess the quality of the program, problems at admission are compared to program achievements and the impact of service is evaluated for each person. Job seeking skills are provided to those clients who are considered job ready. When possible, the primary responsibility for job placement rests with clients. They are expected to learn where to find available jobs, how to fill out an application form, and how to conduct themselves in a job interview. Goodwill's brochure describing placement services ends with, "The best demonstration of the program's success in this area is when a client is able to go out and get a job on his own."

WHAT MAKES THIS PROGRAM EXEMPLARY?

When a program is identified as excellent it is important to determine what factors contributed to its success. There are no simple answers on how to become exemplary. For years, researchers have investigated promising theories of excellence with the hope of identifying

factors which create excellence such as leadership, high powered strategic planning, and teamwork. What follows are observations of key factors which may have contributed toward Broward Goodwill's exemplary performance.

THE PROGRAM IS HIGHLY WORK FOCUSED

It is surprisingly easy for work-oriented programs to lose their focus on work and end up providing services which are very much like those offered by mental health centers. This can happen when employment programs adopt intervention techniques designed to restructure personality rather than focus on specific behaviors which affect work. Some rehabilitation professionals disparage work-focused programs because they are often limited to crisis-based problems like earning a living and ignore the existence of chronic, long-term personality disorders. To their credit, the Board and staff at Broward Goodwill have never lost touch with their basic mission, a concentrated focus on the business of getting people jobs.

A commitment to work is found everywhere at Goodwill. Brochures remind clients that the goal of the program is "...in order that, one day, you may obtain competitive employment...." Further evidence of a work focus can be seen in the evaluation database which identifies employment as the most important program objective and values this as being four times more important than the next objective. Throughout the service program, written documents describe the work behaviors that clients need to learn and how these behaviors should be developed and rewarded. This focus on work, which seems totally ingrained in Board, staff, and clients plays an important part in the program's success.

THE EXTENDED TEAM

While many programs are content to organize facility staff into service teams, Broward Goodwill has adopted the concept of the "extended team". Family members are seen as part of the team and are aggressively sought out and involved in the program even if they are initially reluctant to join. Members of the professional community such as State VR Agency counselors and school officials regularly attend team meetings on individual clients and are also routinely asked for their ideas to improve the program. Goodwill policies state that State VR Agency counselors *will* attend certain meetings.

Community organizations are not seen as adversaries to be avoided, but as helpful partners pursuing goals similar to those of the facility. The concept of the extended team also permeates Goodwill, where staff roles are not based on rigid job descriptions,

ritualistic pecking orders, or professional turfdom. Team members cast themselves in fluid, interdependent roles, alternately functioning as a psychologist, social worker, instructor, or job placement specialist depending on client needs.

Significantly, the extended team also includes the client, who participates in the initial staff meetings when admission decisions are made. Clients help to develop treatment plans that they are then expected to sign and follow. Daily measures of productivity and earnings are posted so that everyone can see and discuss them. Quarterly surveys are given to clients with questions such as: "What things would you like changed?" Broward Goodwill has gone beyond the traditional definition of a treatment team. The extended team includes the client, family members, referral sources, payors, the community, and anyone else who can help clients to successfully achieve their goals.

A CLEAR CONCERN FOR STANDARDS

Excellence cannot be achieved unless it is defined and aggressively pursued, something that Goodwill of Broward County has done for many years. Excellence at Broward Goodwill starts with the Board and the Chief Executive Officer setting facility and program goals and providing staff the freedom, encouragement, and resources to achieve them. This may be one reason why turnover is so rare among key staff. In addition to meeting CARF national standards for accreditation, the agency has developed internal goals and performance standards for the work adjustment program which clearly describe objectives (such as "40% of clients should obtain a job"). These standards form the basis of management reports describing the program's performance which are freely shared with the community.

Annual planning efforts result in a concise strategic and operational plan which states the objectives to be achieved. The plan for 1986 contains fifteen goals, all of which contribute toward excellence and can be measured in terms of year-end success or failure. This concern for excellence can best be seen in team meetings where clients' problems are rigorously defined and staff tenaciously address the issue of what can be done to help each person achieve competitive employment. Finally, the commitment to excellence influences clients who are expected to achieve important goals which will help them find a job, relate to co-workers and supervisors, and develop appropriate career paths.

SERVICES ARE DEFINED SO THEY CAN BE IMPROVED

Many facilities describe programs by using ambiguous terms or relying on professional jargon such as "counseling" and "work experience." When services are poorly defined, it is difficult to understand what is provided for (or expected of) clients. As a result, program managers have a hard time analyzing poor outcomes and resolving problems. To their credit, staff at Broward Goodwill have described the Vocational Adjustment Training Program in a way that facilitates understanding and encourages improvements. This clarity enables newly hired staff to understand the services they will provide, gives clients an accurate orientation to the services they will receive, and affords decisionmakers enough structure to intervene if program results are less than satisfactory.

SUMMARY

Goodwill Industries of Broward County has been able to get jobs for severely disabled unemployed people at a rate which is substantially higher (40% vs 23%) than other applicants in the Search for Excellence. In addition, it has served persons with severe problems and has done so at a comparatively low cost per client day. More importantly, the program has achieved high levels of client benefits despite a physical plant and equipment which are adequate, but by no means ostentatious.

Obviously, many factors can contribute to excellence. What is clear is that the Goodwill program has a strong work focus, holds itself accountable for accomplishments, and has an energetic, creative staff. The working relationship that program staff enjoy with clients, the Board, and the community is open and cooperative. New ideas are freely presented and honestly discussed and it is clear that everyone is more concerned with the welfare of their clients than with personal agendas.

For further information on this award-winning program, contact:
Steve Fleisch, Deputy Director, or
Robert J. Galinis, Executive Director
Goodwill Industries of Broward County, Inc.
1830 S. Federal Highway, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316
Telephone: (305) 525-1343

FACILITY-BASED
WORK ADJUSTMENT
FINALISTS

SWEEP trainees learn retail sales and inventory skills while working in the Center's full service discount store.

LAUREL HILL CENTER

Laurel Hill was established in 1972 for socially isolated persons with chronic mental illness who were offered social activities and support services by volunteers. With an annual budget of $800,000, it now serves over 250 persons a year in a variety of employment and community living services.

At the Center, work adjustment is one component of a five phase continuum called SWEEP (Supervised Work Experience and Employment Program). Work adjustment clients are able to utilize all SWEEP programs as needed in addition to services such as social and independent living skills. Vocational services were first provided in 1978 and have achieved considerable success. Application data submitted by the work adjustment program showed that over 50% of clients obtained employment or further training. Significantly, jobs obtained in competitive employment paid nearly $150.00 a week. The client population consists of persons with chronic mental illness, many of whom have histories of previous institutionalization.

The focus of services is more than work experience and job placement. Low staff to client ratios enable the Center to also provide a great deal of personal support and job coaching. The program has been recognized by other professionals as being very successful in getting people back to work. Staff are described as being committed and enthusiastic, having close linkages to the community, and are aggressive in considering creative alternatives. This counseling-based vocational program is considered to be an advocate and leader of services for individuals with psychiatric disabilities.

For further information on this exemplary program contact:
Mary Alice Brown, Executive Director, or
David Basel, Vocational Director
Laurel Hill Center
2621 Augusta Street, Eugene, OR 97403-2295
Telephone: (503) 485-6340

TCI clients manufacture some 35,000 coin bags each month for the U.S. Mint under a contract with National Industries for the Severely Handicapped (NISH).

TRI-COUNTY INDUSTRIES, INC.

This facility has served persons with disabilities since 1966 and now admits over 500 individuals a year to programs such as vocational evaluation, vocational adjustment, work activity, JTPA job placement services, clerical training, programs in industry, and respite care. The agency is located in Rocky Mount, North Carolina and serves persons living in a five county area. The annual budget is $1.7 million and work has recently been completed on a 12,000 square foot addition to expand program activities.

The work adjustment program has four full time staff who provide a work environment for persons with disabilities so they can learn appropriate work behaviors leading to competitive employment. During a recent program year, 100 individuals were closed from services. Clients tend to be young, have conditions of mental retardation and chronic mental illness, and have extensive histories of institutionalization. Persons served in this program can also receive job seeking skills, drivers education, communication skills, and independent living services. Over 45% of clients closed from the program obtained a significant benefit.

The program has a reputation of being well managed with a strong business orientation. Facility staff are heavily involved in community activities. Professional colleagues and referral sources refer to this work adjustment program as the best in the state, always in the forefront of new ideas and the provision of leadership to other facilities.

For further information on this exemplary program contact:
Chet Mottershead, Executive Director, or
Steve Stone, Director of Rehabilitation and Administration
Tri-County Industries, Inc.
P.O. Box 789, Rocky Mount, NC 27801-0789
Telephone: (919) 977-3800

LONG-TERM SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT

AWARD WINNER AND FINALISTS

Opportunity Center, Inc.

Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida, Inc.

St. Paul Rehabilitation Center, Inc.

Introduction

Long-term sheltered employment programs provide an opportunity for persons with disabilities to earn an income within a facility, usually referred to as a "sheltered workshop". For the 1986 Search, the primary goal of the program was to provide an earned income within a sheltered setting. Typically, most people served in such programs are severely disabled, have never worked competitively, and remain in a sheltered setting for several years. For some, however, it is a period of growth and eventual movement into regular competitive employment. Each person served in the program must be covered by an appropriate Department of Labor Sheltered Employment Certificate. Persons working under a Work Activity Certificate or those who spend the majority of their working hours outside the facility in a competitive work setting (such as in community-based supported work) were not eligible in this program category.

Thirteen measures in five categories were used as indicators of excellence. The categories, measures, and values or weights assigned to each are shown below:

HOW EXCELLENCE WAS MEASURED

Categories and Measures	Point Values	
	Categories	Measures
1. *Benefits to Current Clients*	55 Points	
a. Percent of time on paid work		55 Points
b. Average hourly earnings		25 Points
c. Value of fringe benefits		10 Points
d. Annual turnover rate		10 Points
2. *Benefits to Former Clients*	15 Points	
a. Percent competitively employed		50 Points
b. Percent in skill training programs		20 Points
c. Percent in supported work programs		20 Points
d. Average weekly earnings in employment		10 Points
3. *Productivity*	15 Points	
a. Client earnings per $1 of program cost		50 Points
b. Client hours of work per staff hour		50 Points
4. *Client Severity*	10 Points	
a. Average number of severe conditions		100 Points
5. *Attachments*	5 Points	
a. Quality of data base		50 Points
b. Quality of "why exemplary" explanation		50 Points

A total of 82 applications were received from facilities in 43 states in the first annual Search for Excellence. Six states were represented by five to ten facilities each. The typical applicant (using median values on each measure) provides about 22 hours of paid work per week, with clients earning $1.97 per hour and fringe benefits (paid time off and health insurance) valued at $115 per year. One-third of the persons leaving these programs for any reason obtained regular competitive employment, occupational skill training, or supported work. The average annual cost to maintain one client in the program is $6,001. For each dollar of program cost, a client in the average sheltered employment program earns $.34.

OCI's expanding industrial and technical capacity includes die-cutting of both woven and non-woven product samples for major marketing and promotional campaigns.

AWARD WINNER

OPPORTUNITY CENTER, INC.

Wilmington, Delaware

Packing and worldwide distribution of product literature and promotional displays for "Fortune 500" businesses like DuPont supports one entire production department at Opportunity Center, Inc.

THE FACILITY

Opportunity Center, Inc. (OCI) is located in Wilmington, Delaware, a city of some 70,000. Clients come to OCI from throughout New Castle County, which has a population of 320,000. The facility, which is the first sheltered workshop in Delaware, was started in 1957 by the Delaware Association of Retarded Citizens and the Delaware Foundation for Retarded Children in response to a study funded by the United Community Fund of Northern Delaware. The agency's first home was a school basement until it moved to its own building in 1959. Rapid growth necessitated moving into the present 50,000 square foot facility in 1964 and the purchase of an additional 9500 square foot warehouse in 1978. In 1975, the Center was the first rehabilitation facility in Delaware to be accredited by CARF. Sheltered employment has been OCI's main program. Long-range plans include the possibility of adding a similar facility in the Newark, Delaware area which would enable it to better serve that portion of the county. The Center is now one of three sheltered employment programs in Wilmington. OCI's Mission Statement characterizes its overall philosophy:

> "The purpose of this corporation is to provide an environment where handicapped workers can obtain instruction and guidance to enable each individual to fulfill their maximum potential as a worker; to pay commensurate wages to workers while in employment; to assist qualified workers in finding regular employment in business and industry; and to provide continued employment in the workshop for those who are able to perform useful and productive work."

OTHER PROGRAMS AT THE CENTER

In addition to the sheltered employment program, OCI also provides programs in the following areas: work adjustment, vocational skills training, a new supported work program in cooperation with the local Easter Seal Society, and job development and placement. Across all programs OCI served 156 people in 1985, has a staff of 30 and an annual budget of about $2.5 million. Most (88%) of its income comes from contract sales. The balance is from service fees for work adjustment, skill training, and placement, a small state subsidy for sheltered employment, and United Way of Delaware.

The workshop provides a variety of opportunities for workers in the sheltered employment program, as well as work and training sites for the Center's work adjustment and occupational skill training programs. One of the more successful training programs has been the ten-week Nurses Aide course which is conducted off-site. Most clients are referred to OCI for either work adjustment or skill training by the Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, but some are sent by the Department of Mental Health or private insurance companies.

A few people are admitted directly to the sheltered employment program based on the recommendation of another vocational evaluation or work adjustment program in the area. DVR is the primary purchaser of OCI's work adjustment and skill training services. It also provides a special state-funded subsidy for sheltered employment positions to help defray some of the extra costs of serving persons whose productivity is very low or who need more intensive supervision. The Center uses this subsidy for the direct benefit of clients by providing medical insurance and special support services.

AN INVOLVED BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND AN EXPERIENCED STAFF

OCI's Board of Directors is made up of 23 persons and includes a particularly strong representation of business and industry in the area. There is no limitation on how long members can serve and several have been active for many years. An Advisory Council, made up of a number for former Board members, takes on special assignments from the current Board and Executive Director. Trustees have given particular attention to the economic well-being of OCI, and they take special pride in the Center's increased financial independence over the last several years. The governing body is also very helpful in identifying potential opportunities for new contract or sub-contract work.

OCI has experienced very low staff turnover, averaging about two people (6%) a year. The average staff member has been employed by the Center for eleven years, while the range is from one to 27 years. The average age is 44 and the range is from 28 to 70. Significantly, several staff were one-time clients of OCI. In order to keep good people, the facility provides a variety of incentives including special recognition and cash awards based on performance. Upward movement within the organization is also encouraged. Ten of the current supervisory staff, including one general manager and four production managers, all former clients, were promoted to the positions they now hold from within the Center.

THE AWARD-WINNING SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

OCI's sheltered employment program has a staff of 19, an annual budget of over $500,000 plus client wages of an additional $500,000, and serves about 64 people at any one time. It has relatively "high functioning" clients, averaging 1.9 severe conditions compared to 2.7 for all Search applicants. About 40% are persons with mental retardation, 30% with mental illness and 30% with other physical and sensory disabilities. Over the past several years, the number and percentage of persons in this program who have mental illness has been increasing. Another facility in the Wilmington area provides a work activity employment program that serves individuals who have a more limited capacity for work. Most clients of the sheltered employment program are admitted following work adjustment training at OCI, while a small number enter directly from other community programs.

Clients in the sheltered employment program who show employment potential are encouraged to move into regular competitive jobs. All sheltered workers are reviewed at least annually to ascertain the possibility of obtaining and succeeding in competitive employment. Although the rate of turnover of clients in this program is not high (23% a year), 60% of the people who left the program for any reason during the past three years were closed into competitive employment. This is almost twice that of the average sheltered employment program in the Search.

Extensive follow-up is provided to those who are placed, with contacts at one, three and 12-month intervals, and periodically thereafter. In order to encourage workshop clients to accept the risk of competitive employment, anyone who is placed and is unable to keep his or her job can usually return to OCI regardless of how long they have been working. When the workload is especially heavy, the Center's sheltered employment program provides temporary jobs for clients of other rehabilitation agencies. These jobs generally last three to five weeks and provide a source of income for clients, many of whom are actively seeking competitive employment in the community. OCI also subcontracts work to another facility in Delaware and has provided technical assistance to other workshops on contracts with an international firm headquartered in Wilmington.

HIGH EARNINGS AND BENEFITS FOR CLIENTS

The client-workers at OCI enjoy a particularly high level of earnings in the sheltered work program, averaging $3.70 per hour and ranging from $1.50 to $7.50 in 1985. This compares to an average (median) of $1.97 per hour for all facilities that applied in this

program category. OCI staff are particularly diligent about monitoring "commensurate wages" to determine what other employers in the area are paying for the same jobs and adjusting client pay accordingly. The typical worker averages 37 hours a week, compared to 22 hours per week for all applicants in this year's Search. In the month of October 1985, for example, the average sheltered employment client at OCI earned just over $700, compared to $233 for all other applicants.

Clients in this program also get substantial employee benefits, including ten days of paid sick time, eleven holidays, and five days of paid vacation after one year (15 days after 10 years). Insurance for health care and hospitalization is also provided. The percentage of the premium paid by OCI varies with the length of employment but averages over $600 per year per person. The total dollar value of fringe benefits (paid time off plus insurance) per year is over $1,300 per person, compared to an average (median) of $115 per year for other Search applicants. During the last two years, the Center paid year-end bonuses based on overall agency income to all staff and clients.

The success of this program is due, at least in part, to the wide variety of work opportunities that can accommodate a broad range of client abilities and interests.

Examples of contract work include:

- *Printing*. The full-service printing department does work for over 500 area businesses, associations, and community groups every year. Since 1958, it has produced a distinctive "Historic Delaware" series of Christmas cards, notepaper, and framed prints.
- *Information Processing*. The largest contract in this area involves computerized data entry to process approximately 6000 vendor invoices every day for an international firm.
- *Special Production*. Work in this department includes assembly and testing of chemical container venting devices, manufacturing of applicators for the printing industry, and various sub-contracts for assembly and packaging.
- *Furniture Restoration*. This encompasses a variety of skills from basic woodworking to detailed repair and restoration of antique furniture.
- *Specialties*. Work in this unit includes packaging product samples such as textiles, mail sorting and forwarding, premium fulfillment, and processing applications for flight insurance.
- *Microfilming*. Microfilming of documents is done for the State of Delaware and several corporations. The State contract calls for the processing of almost six million documents a year.

- *Commissary Service.* OCI provides a commissary service for a state correctional institution. This involves processing and filling individual inmate orders for snacks and personal items which are then delivered to the institution.
- *Retail Sales.* The workshop is also the site of a warehouse outlet for Lucite acrylic sheeting. Several job opportunities have been created selling factory seconds to the general public.

WHAT MAKES THIS PROGRAM EXEMPLARY?

There are several factors which contribute to the Opportunity Center's high standard of excellence:

Operates Like a Business. In the past, sheltered workshops have functioned as a haven for severely handicapped individuals who, for whatever reason, could not succeed in a competitive setting. Because of its long-term nature, great care must be taken to ensure that clients with potential for greater challenges do not become dependent on a sheltered environment. To their credit, the staff at OCI are not providing a refuge from the real world. The Center operates as a business that provides employment and training opportunities for disabled persons. The administration, Board, and key staff all agree that their success in preparing disabled individuals for work and providing quality work opportunities depends on functioning first as a strong, viable business. Therefore, as an exemplary rehabilitation facility, OCI is strongly committed to providing quality services to business and industry, including both contract work and the preparation of job-ready workers. The workshop has up-to-date equipment and brings in experts in industrial engineering to increase efficiency, maximize the productivity of workers, and create a businesslike environment which encourages goal setting and individual growth.

The Center is organized into seven departments; six for production and sheltered employment and one for rehabilitation which includes the work adjustment, skill training, and job placement programs. Each department is a cost center, prepares its own budgets, and receives its own monthly financial reports. If one department uses the resources of another, the internal accounting process "bills" that department. This encourages cooperation between internal units and makes it cost effective for production departments to work with persons in work adjustment or occupational skill training even though these individuals are generally less productive and require more supervision than regular workers.

Obtains and Maintains Good Work Contracts. In a typical year, OCI handles as many as 2000 jobs of varying size and complexity for some 500 customers. This volume means the Center can provide a

rich variety of employment opportunities for clients. Over the past several years the types of jobs have changed in response to changes in the local economy. For example, clients now do more service work such as information processing and data entry and less of the routine bench work which is so rapidly disappearing from American industry.

OCI has developed a reputation for quality work and on-time delivery at a fair price. This has resulted in getting a substantial proportion of renewed contracts and additional business from satisfied customers. The Center has been working with American Express for 25 years and with DuPont for 28 years. OCI received DuPont's "Award for Excellence" in 1984 and again in 1985 as one of thirteen outstanding contractors across the country in competition with many private sector firms. Facility staff and clients know that they have to do top quality work to get and keep contracts, therefore they set high standards and work cooperatively to meet production goals. It is not at all unusual for staff and clients to come in and work evenings and weekends to make sure a job is successfully completed on time.

Written comments received from business customers regarding OCI's performance on contract and sub-constract work include:

> "We appreciate your cooperation and prompt ret[illegible] finished goods – many times on a rush basis enabling us to continue operations without shutdowns."
> "No other supplier we deal with gives us the excellent personal attention we receive from you on all our work."
> "Your ability to respond quickly to changing needs is also something we have grown to expect as the normal way of doing business, but is often missing in some organizations."

Although OCI has been very successful in getting repeat contracts, the development of new business is an on-going process. The Center maintains contact with the community through a newsletter and customer appreciation luncheons. Private tours are scheduled with current vendors who are encouraged to bring guests, especially from other businesses that are not yet working with OCI.

No one person has responsibility for sales and marketing. It is shared by each department working to get and keep contracts that will provide steady work for clients and help that unit be financially

successful. Over the years, Center staff have developed considerable expertise in bidding on contracts. They know the true cost of producing a product and providing a service and are able to compete successfully for business. Quotations include not only direct labor and usual overhead costs, but also the cost of equipment and technical assistance that may be needed to gear up for a particular job.

Experienced Staff Focused on a Common Goal. The goal of providing quality employment for disabled persons – either at OCI or in the community – is well ingrained in all staff. Individually, they have a very personal identification with the Center and are justly proud of its accomplishments over the years. The low turnover among staff results in a high level of skills and practical experience in relating to the business community, other service agencies, and OCI clients.

In summary, the sheltered employment program at Opportunity Center, Inc. is outstanding among its peers because:

- it combines a strong business orientation with a consistent dedication to serving disabled persons;
- it allows clients to achieve their highest possible level of potential as workers;
- it attracts quality work that provides a rich variety of jobs with good earnings; and
- it encourages and rewards personal growth, thereby maintaining a staff of unusual stability and experience.

For further information on this award-winning program, contact:
Ronald R. Stroud, Executive Director, or
Robert J. Lennon, Director, Personnel & Public Relations
Opportunity Center, Inc.
1030 Bowers Street
Wilmington, DE 19802
Telephone: (302) 762-0300

LONG-TERM SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT FINALISTS

Goodwill clients learn marketable skills by repairing and selling used consumer goods.

GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA, INC.

Goodwill Industries of Southwest Florida is a relatively small vocational facility providing programs of vocational evaluation and work adjustment in addition to sheltered employment. It has been operating for over 20 years, serves about 300 people annually from a five county area, and has a total annual budget of $1.5 million.

The sheltered employment program has a daily capacity of 30 people, an annual budget of just under $100,000 not including client wages, and a full-time equivalent staff of four. It provides a good level of earnings for clients, averaging nearly $3.00 an hour or about $400 per month. There have been no layoffs in 20 years and clients in this program get the same fringe benefits as regular Goodwill employees. All of the jobs are related to the recycling and sales of used goods. Through an arrangement with the Department of Community and Adult Education, program clients can participate in basic skills classes and skill training for specific occupations. Although the program does not have a particularly high rate of turnover (about 20% annually), two-thirds of those who left over the past several years obtained competitive employment averaging $166 per week. The facility is known as one of the best in the region with a deep commitment to serving persons with disabilities.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:
Kathy Beehler, Executive Director
Goodwill – Southwest Florida
199 Bayshore Road
North Fort Meyers, FL 33903
Telephone: (813) 995-2106

ST. PAUL REHABILITATION CENTER

A team leader at the Center (R.) shows a fellow employee how to inspect microfiche for errors under a contract from a large computer corporation.

The St. Paul Rehabilitation Center provides a variety of vocational, child development, and rehabilitation services. Overall it serves about 2200 people a year with an annual **budget of $2.5 million**. The Center is also active in a consortium of public and private agencies providing coordinated services to persons with chronic mental illness.

The sheltered employment program serves about 40 people at a time, has a staff of 3.3 full-time equivalents and an annual budget of nearly $200,000 not including client wages. In the last several years it has successfully increased the variety of work opportunities available in the program, enabling clients to become better prepared for the kinds of jobs which actually exist in the community. The result has been more challenging jobs for clients, increased earnings, and a higher rate of placement into competitive employment.

The largest number of people served in the program have chronic mental illness, although others are mentally retarded or have substantial physical disabilities. Most have multiple handicapping conditions. The typical worker earns $2.61 per hour and works about 30 hours a week. Fringe benefits include nearly four weeks of paid holidays and vacation time after one year in addition to 12 days of paid sick leave.

During a recent year, 30 people left the program for various reasons and nearly half obtained regular competitive employment averaging $180 per week. Job-ready clients are strongly encouraged to leave the program for better employment opportunities in the community. The Center is seen by employers and other service providers as a leader that is willing to change in response to community needs.

For further information on this exemplary program, contact:
Eugene Stelman, Vice President
St. Paul Rehabilitation Center, Inc.
319 Eagle Street
St. Paul, MN 55102
Telephone: (612) 227-8471

OCCUPATIONAL SKILL TRAINING

AWARD WINNER AND FINALISTS

Rise, Inc.

Abilities, Inc. of Florida
Rehabilitation Center

ICD – International Center for the Disabled

Introduction

Occupational skill training programs provide job training to persons with disabilities so they can obtain training related competitive employment. For purposes of this award, the program must have provided training in at least three separate and unrelated occupations. Additional requirements were that training was expected to last between two and six months and training courses should have a written curriculum and instructional objectives. A diploma or certificate was typically awarded upon completion.

Ten performance measures grouped in four categories were used as indicators of excellence. The categories, measures, and values or weights assigned to each are shown below.

HOW EXCELLENCE WAS MEASURED

Categories and Measures	Point Values	
	Categories	Measures
1. *Benefits to Clients*	60 Points	
a. Job entry rate (training related)		50 Points
b. Job entry rate (not training related)		15 Points
c. % receiving advanced training		20 Points
d. Weekly earnings		15 Points
2. *Productivity*	20 Points	
a. Cost per client day		50 Points
b. Staff days to client days		50 Points
3. *Client Severity*	15 Points	
a. Average number of severe conditions		100 Points
4. *Attachments*	5 Points	
a. Quality of database		33 Points
b. Quality of "why exemplary" explanation		33 Points
c. Quality of curriculum		34 Points

A total of thirty-eight OST applications were received in the first annual Search for Excellence. The average applicant for a skill training award had a client job entry rate of over 60%, a daily per client cost of $37.00, and served clients who were less severely disabled than clients in other program categories. With an average job entry cost of $4,402, skill training programs are highly cost-effective.

AWARD WINNER

RISE, INC.
Spring Lake Park,
Minnesota

After skill training, a former client of the Rise Transitional Employment Program now works for a private company that repairs and installs road signs for the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

A Rise client learns to be a nursing assistant/health care aide by attending to the personal needs of a resident at the Crest View nursing home in suburban Minneapolis.

THE FACILITY

> "All of our programs are offered in segregated settings ... our sheltered employment model allows few persons to progress to competitive employment ... much of our training has little to do with what it takes to succeed in the working world."

Does this sound like an initiative memo by the Federal government or a recent position paper produced by an unhappy group of client advocates? In fact, it is neither. It was taken from an internal program document of Rise, Inc. that is over ten years old. Rise, this year's winner in occupational skill training programs, used this insightful self-study to move aggressively toward providing services in community work sites while lowering the allocation of resources to facility-based programs. The success of their efforts is demonstrated quite clearly by the fact that now over 70% of the facility's 450 daily clients are served in community-based sites.

Rise is seen by funders and other service providers as a well managed, fast moving and highly responsive facility which in the last decade has positioned itself as a state of the art provider of rehabilitation services in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Incorporated in 1971, this relatively young agency puts a new program on line every year in a highly competitive and sophisticated service market. In addition to traditional in-house habilitation programs like sheltered employment and work activity, Rise offers a wide variety of non-traditional vocational programs.

Unlike skill training programs which emphasize classroom instruction and require costly equipment, the Rise skill training program (known as TEP, Transitional Employment Program) can move rapidly into promising areas, requires no space or equipment within the facility, and provides hands-on training to clients who have problems that are *more severe* than persons served in the average facility-based work adjustment program. In addition, TEP is so cost-effective that about two-thirds of those entering training find competitive employment at an average cost which is over $7,000 *less* than the cost of a placement from a work adjustment program.

FROM SHELTERED WORK TO COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

Rise was founded as a grass roots facility by parents of young adults with mental retardation who were about to leave public school. From a modest beginning in a converted garage and

proceeding through several rocky and unsuccessful years, Rise now occupies a modern brick-faced building nestled in a middle class neighborhood in a small suburb of the Twin Cities called Spring Lake Park. Like many rehabilitation facilities facing a loss in traditional revenues, Rise has developed a wide variety of funding sources including State Vocational Rehabilitation, mental health agencies, United Way, and private foundations. For example, in community-based programs, nine separate funders underwite services.

Rise has two major service divisions or tracks: The Internal Services Division provides facility-based services such as sheltered employment and work activity and the Industry-Based Services Division offers community-based services such as skill training and supported work. Most of the agency's 15 programs are provided in the community, offering direct services such as independent living skills, supported work, job placement, school-to-work transition, and workers compensation. Significantly, every client, even those referred for facility-based services, is first reviewed to determine if community services would be more appropriate.

Rise has a twelve member Board of local persons consisting primarily of elected public officials, middle managers, and executives of small businesses. From a 1972 operating budget of $85,000 and a caseload of six clients, Rise now spends $2.4 million a year, serves about 1400 persons, and places almost 300 people in competitive employment. There are over 40 professional staff, most of whom are actively involved in partnerships with employers, community services, and policymakers. With its young and highly pragmatic staff, competent management, and a willingness to take risks, Rise has won several state awards and widespread recognition as one of Minnesota's finest vocational facilities.

THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Rise is located in the northern tier of suburbs ringing the metropolitan area of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Referrals to the Spring Lake Park facility come from throughout the metropolitan area which has a population of about two million persons. The unemployment rate is less than 5%, a rate which has been consistently below the national average for the past several years.

The Twin City area is well endowed with referral sources who favor community rather than government-provided services. As a result, Rise both competes and cooperates with a wide range of excellent rehabilitation programs and support services in the metropolitan area. Advocates in the Twin Cities are well organized and have been successful in encouraging innovative rehabilitation programs.

THE OCCUPATIONAL SKILL TRAINING PROGRAM

During the last calendar year, the Rise skill training program completed services for sixty-five persons at a budgeted cost of $159,739. Five full time staff produced a total of 5,735 training days at a cost per day of $28.00. Significantly, over 60% of persons served obtained competitive employment. The program is designed to help clients with learning disabilities, mental retardation, chronic mental illness, head trauma, and other severe physical disabilities. Most trainees are recent graduates of special education programs in the public school system.

A second group of older trainees is directly referred by counselors from the State VR Agency and range in age from 21 to 30. Despite considerable effort, Rise has had limited success in getting referrals of older trainees. Rather than depending solely on the program's excellent reputation, marketing efforts in the school system are aggressive and continuous. Most clients are supported by funds from the State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency. Over 200 persons have been served since the program's inception in 1977.

HOW THE PROGRAM OPERATES

With help from their State VR counselor, clients have considerable freedom in selecting their own skill training area. At the present time, 11 TEP training areas are available, including: Laundry, Food Services, Housekeeping, Nursing Assistance/Health Care Aide, Warehouse, Custodial/Maintenance Services, Clerical Services, Auto-Body Preparation, Retail Sales, Messenger/Mail Clerk, and Hotel Bussing. New training fields and host business sites are continuously added and clients are admitted to the program whenever a training slot becomes available. However, it is not uncommon that some training slots remain open for long periods of time because there is no client to use them.

The first two weeks of the program is spent in evaluation on a training related work site. Most of the clients completing evaluation receive training in the area in which they have been evaluated and more than 80% of clients complete training.

Behavior problems are dealt with in a direct and candid fashion. Although many trainees have such difficulties, very few fail to complete training because of work habit or behavior problems. Consultation and counseling are readily available for trainees with more serious adjustment needs. Training takes place in diversified business settings such as the service industries (hotels, restaurants, nursing homes), manufacturing firms, and various small businesses. Training sites for groups of clients are developed by Rise marketing staff while single-site placements are developed by placement

personnel. All trainee sites are closely related to good job opportunities which match the needs of Rise clients. Community contacts with potential work sites emphasize benefits to the employer such as bottom-line profits and a stable work force. Although the employers assist in supervision, Rise staff retain responsibility for each client.

The length of an individual program is determined by competency-based assessments and the availability of a training related job. Job placement is a shared responsibility between client and staff, who make use of whatever pragmatic approach will get trainees into the labor market. To make room for new clients, placements with employers who are not involved as host sites are prefered. Some 80% of the people placed into competitive employment are still on the job after 90 days.

Unlike other skill training programs, Rise has almost no funds tied up in capital investment. Instead, inexpensive community sites are selected by Rise which provide up-to-date training consistent with market realities. Because fixed costs are not a major consideration, Rise is not reluctant to drop underutilized training areas or add others which seem to have better long range potential.

COSTS AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The average cost of Rise training services is less than $28.00 a day, a figure which is about five dollars less then a day spent in the average facility-based work adjustment program. This low cost is partially due to sharing of work space, facilities, and staff with host sites. Because staff usually have bachelors degrees with experience in more than one skill training area, they can work at more than one job site. When needed, staff are shifted to those areas where clients are available for training.

Potential training areas are carefully reviewed to determine performance standards and appropriateness for the skill training program. These standards are routinely upgraded every two years to keep abreast of a rapidly changing job market. Training sites are developed for individuals as well as small groups of clients. In some instances trainees may rotate between several training sites. Written agreements between Rise and employers at each training site define the roles and responsibilities of both parties.

Curriculum outlines are established for each training area. These are quite lengthy and specify in detail what must be mastered before the client completes training. Trainees progress at different rates and Rise credits them for previously acquired job skills. Training supervisors are expected to help each client acquire job skills and learn the important behaviors needed to keep a job. Rise

also monitors trainee progress through daily ratings and monthly reports on each client.

TRAINEE EARNINGS

Wages are administered in several ways, all of which are in compliance with Department of Labor (DOL) requirements. Wages and hours are negotiated with host sites. Some companies prefer hiring a trainee as an employee at regular wages and fringe benefits (a method preferred by Rise) while others contract for labor with Rise serving as the payroll agent. Earnings can be based on prevailing wages, commensurate wages, or piece-rates. A document written by Rise which describes a variety of community-based services including this program will soon be available from the Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute in Menomonie, Wisconsin, entitled, *The Industrial Work Model. A Guide for Developing Transitional and Supported Employment*, by John J. Barrett and Don Lavin.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Rise is presently conducting a job market survey to identify new training areas. Marketing staff are also trying to increase the number of referrals of clients for skill training who are over thirty years of age. In addition, plans are now in progress to work with area vocational education programs to integrate classroom training with field-based work experiences. Under the Rise proposal, traditional vocational education programs would be modified to include underserved groups such as persons with learning disabilities. Finally, Rise is exploring better ways that staff in the supported work program who have talents in behavioral management can provide services to the TEP program.

WHAT MAKES THIS PROGRAM EXEMPLARY?

To help other facilities improve their programs, searchers for excellence attempt to identify one or more outstanding factors that might explain why an organization is exemplary. As such, elements like Trustees, mission statements, leadership, and a host of other components are reviewed to find what makes one organization stand apart from all others. In the case of Rise, finding a single factor that created excellence in the skill training program was difficult because Rise, it seems, does everything well. In effect, no single element explains why Rise provides this nation's best occupational skill training program. Perhaps the most perceptive observation one could make about Rise is that it does not appear to have any significant weaknesses.

This all around excellence is readily apparent in relation to four key organizational traits:

FIRST, RISE KNOWS WHERE IT IS GOING

- Rise has a very broad mission statement which focuses on employment, but is written in such a way that staff have many options on how to proceed. Rise has thrived under this broad mandate and flexible management style as evidenced by the wide range of programs that are offered.
- Rise keeps in touch with the current market and is able to anticipate trends. Supported work, currently the nation's "hottest" vocational program, has already been operating at Rise for almost four years. In fact, the facility's expertise has been recognized by the State of Minnesota which awarded Rise a contract to provide technical assistance on supported work for developmental achievement centers.
- Rise administrators avoid organizing programs around managerially limited entities such as professional disciplines or vague services such as "work experience." Instead, for each of its fifteen programs, Rise staff are guided by a carefully defined set of program goals, measurable objectives, lists of available services, and target populations to be served.

SECOND, RISE KNOWS HOW TO MANAGE RESOURCES

- On a yearly basis, top administrators at Rise look at existing programs to see how well they match community needs. In addition to annual planning sessions, Rise succeeds in new ventures because of an ability to keep in touch with the market. Key Rise staff stay in constant contact with funding and referral sources, community leaders, and changes in Federal policy. Rise has maintained its strong market position by depending on responsive administrators who recognize that their job is to understand the future.
- Rise staff use objective data to help make decisions about programs. A detailed evaluation design is used to determine whether each program is serving the target population, if the outcomes are consistent with expectations, and whether services are efficiently provided. The amount of data available to decisionmakers can be illustrated by a recent statistical report on Rise programs which ran almost 90 pages. A new custom software program is being developed which will improve the quality of management reports and allow decisionmakers to more thoroughly analyze program operations.

- Sound decisions are made at Rise because staff work together to review options from different vantage points. The Board operates as a check and balance to adventurous ideas and decides which staff recommendations are consistent with the facility's mission. Administrators constantly assess community needs as well as the economic viability of new innovations. Staff also review major decisions in terms of impact on clients.

THIRD, RISE PROVIDES QUALITY SERVICES THAT GET RESULTS

- Unlike other organizations that make hiring decisions based on academic credentials, Rise does not require masters degrees or above for any full-time position. Instead, administrators and supervisors look for individuals with strong interpersonal skills ("peppy" is a word frequently used). In the case of the skill training program, staff have work experience in each training area.
- In addition to utilization of program evaluation data and encouragement of informal communications, Rise has developed Quality Circles to "get input in an organized way." The circles are used for several purposes but primarily to improve the quality of services. Such meetings are not open to administrators, virtually any topic can be discussed, and participants are asked to clearly define problems and, most importantly, to come up with recommended solutions.
- While many facilities use the term "partnership," Rise prides itself on its ability to stay close to customer needs through an identifiable marketing program called "A Partnership That Works!" Strong involvement with the business community for in-house subcontract production and community-based client services has resulted in important relationships with more than 100 Twin City employers.

FINALLY, RISE IS WILLING TO CHANGE

- What is unique about Rise is that everyone – Board, administration, and staff – share a common vision that Rise should lead others by becoming an exemplary provider of rehabilitation services. Everyone also understands the inevitable tradeoff between stability and innovation and works together to ensure an appropriate balance between the two.

- When community representatives describe Rise's most outstanding characteristic, they invariably use the term "responsiveness." Rise has a tradition of change based on needs expressed by the community – whether they be advocates, referral sources, employers, or funders. Relationships with the community demonstrate a great deal of cooperation based upon positive experiences in the past.
- Many organizations find it necessary to process ideas by requiring "feasibility papers" or by feeding proposed changes through a chain of committees. Rise has gone about the business of change by creating a climate of open communications where ideas are freely exchanged at all levels. Instead of competing for individual recognition, staff members build on each other's ideas in an atmosphere of mutual support. By nurturing the process of innovation and encouraging innovators, Rise has created a climate which should produce constructive changes for years to come.

For further information on this award-winning program contact:
John J. Barrett, Executive Director, or
Don Lavin, Program Director
Rise, Inc.
8406 Sunset Road N.E., Spring Lake Park, MN 55432
Telephone: (612) 786-8334

OCCUPATIONAL SKILL TRAINING FINALISTS

In addition to data entry (shown here), Abilities clients can also learn related skills in clerical training, word processing, and computer programming.

ABILITIES INC. OF FLORIDA REHABILITATION CENTER

The Abilities Rehabilitation Center of Clearwater, Florida is a 27 year old facility that serves the Tampa Bay area. In 1985 Abilities assisted almost 800 persons in five separate programs.

The Skill Training Program provides training in seven occupations; computer programming, clerical/data entry and word processing, electronic assembly, advanced electronics, computer-assisted drafting, horticulture, and building maintenance. This "high-tech" training program utilizes state-of-the-art equipment and employs instructors with industrial experience. It has unusually close working relationships with private industry and utilizes instructional staff from the vocational education school system. An expansion of the facility's physical plant has just been completed, and it is expected that new training programs will grow accordingly.

During a recent 12 month period, Abilities closed out 110 persons from the OST program. Of those persons who started training, over 70% obtained competitive employment. Average weekly earnings were unusually high, approaching almost $190.00 in training related employment. The program primarily serves clients who are physically disabled, many of them severely, as well as persons who have emotional problems.

For further information on this exemplary program contact:
William Sandonato, Jr., President, *or*
Frank Delucia, Director, Development and Public Relations
Abilities Inc. of Florida Rehabilitation Center
P.O. Box 4010, 2735 Whitney Road
Clearwater, FL 33518-4010
Telephone: (813) 530-0617

Basic skills such as mail sorting, package weighing, and postage metering are learned by the young men and women in ICD's Mail-room-Messenger Program, which also helps disabled youth make the often troubled transition between school and employment.

ICD – INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR THE DISABLED

ICD was founded in 1917 and has an annual budget of approximately $8 million. As such, it is one of the oldest and largest outpatient rehabilitation facilities in the nation. This well known institution provides a comprehensive array of services including: medical, behavioral, social, speech and hearing, vocational rehabilitation, research, and chemical dependency treatment. Included among the vocational programs are vocational evaluation, basic skills, work adjustment, job placement, and skill training.

Occupational skill training is provided in several areas: Clerical (secretary, CRT operator, etc.), Human Service Aides (teacher's assistant, psychiatric aide, etc.), Mailroom/Messenger (messenger, file clerk, etc.), food service, and data entry. The program has established close ties with private industry through business advisory committees and the adoption of business job entry standards. The skill training program primarily serves persons who are emotionally restored and who have severe physical disabilities.

During a recent program year, 120 persons were closed from program services. The program operates with 8.5 full time equivalent staff and has an annual budget of $480,000. Over 60% of persons who were admitted for training services obtained competitive employment or advanced skill training. Training related wages averaged over $200.00 a week. ICD is described by others as a comprehensive, nationally-known facility which is renowned for its professionalism and well qualified staff who are sensitive to both client and community needs.

For further information on this exemplary program contact:
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Bernard Rosenberg, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation, or
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SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

Although the purpose of The J. M. Foundation's "Search" is to identify and encourage excellence, the 320 applications that were received also produced the most comprehensive database ever obtained about specific vocational programs serving persons with disabilities. As such, The J. M. Foundation and Walker and Associates felt that further analysis of the applications would be of considerable interest to professionals who design, research, or provide vocational services to disabled individuals. The analysis involves a total of 16,370 clients served in these four programs: Community-Based Supported Work, 5,600; Facility-Based Work Adjustment, 2,933; Long-Term Sheltered Employment, 6,753; and Occupational Skill Training, 1,084. Readers should recognize that the data represents a self-selected and possibly biased sample of vocational programs and that the accuracy of the applications that were submitted was only partially confirmed. With that in mind, "Search" applicants have provided the field with a unique opportunity to compare the costs, benefits, and efficiency of our nation's most widespread vocational programs.

WHAT BENEFITS DO CLIENTS OBTAIN FROM THESE PROGRAMS?

Program benefits can be best understood by studying how well a program achieved its primary goal. Data on benefits was analyzed for (a) work adjustment and skill training programs which have the common goal of competitive employment and (b) supported work and sheltered work programs which share the goal of helping clients obtain an earned income in a subsidized setting. Based on averages of all program applicants within the same program category, the results are striking.

COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Programs	Job Entry Rate	Weekly Earnings	Severity Level
Work Adjustment	23%	$134	1.75
Skill Training	61%	$179	1.03

The difference in client benefits between work adjustment and skill training programs is quite substantial. Surprisingly, the average work adjustment program has a relatively low rate of client job entry compared to skill training and the jobs that clients obtain after work adjustment are generally at minimum wage levels.

There is also a clear difference in terms of the severity level of the clients served. "Severity" was measured by the average number of conditions for each client served in a program. Applications contained a list of seven conditions that were used to assess client severity, including: under age 22, chronically mentally ill, severely or profoundly retarded, unable to live alone, less than 8th grade education, previously institutionalized, and never competitively employed. Applicants could also add other significant characteristics such as deafness, epilepsy, or blindness. While the data did show that adjustment programs served clients with more severe problems than did skill training programs (1.75 conditions per person served versus 1.03 conditions), the differences in severity of persons served does not by itself explain why skill training programs achieve client benefits at a rate over twice as high as work adjustment programs. Despite the success of skill training, it is estimated that less than 30 of these programs as defined in the Search for Excellence are provided by rehabilitation facilities throughout the country.

WORK ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMS

Not all work adjustment programs had difficulties in getting people back to work. In fact, the differences in client benefits between the most effective programs (using measures of job entry rates and client earnings) and those ranked as least effective are quite substantial as show below:

Applicants	Job Entry Rate	Weekly Earnings	Severity Level
Top 1/3 applicants	39%	$163	1.8
Bottom 1/3 applicants	9%	$106	2.7

The table shows that there are substantial differences in the benefits received by clients from various facilities. Individuals receiving services from the most effective programs are over *four* times as likely to get a job as those served by the least effective programs. Average weekly client earnings are 54% higher in the top third of programs compared to the lowest third. Some, but not all, of these performance differences can be explained by the fact that the least effective programs serve clients with more problems. Low rates of client benefits can also be affected by local conditions such as the amount of unemployment.

The fact remains that all vocational programs are not equally adept at getting people jobs. The large discrepancy between programs ranked at the top and the bottom illustrates the importance of rewarding exemplary programs and encouraging everyone to achieve excellence.

EARNED INCOME PROGRAMS

A comparison was also made on client benefits for supported work and long-term sheltered work programs using five important measures. Fringe benefits were calculated using the annual dollar value of factors such as health insurance, holidays, vacations, and sick pay after one year of service. The data in the following table shows median values for these measures of client benefit.

Measures	Supported Work	Sheltered Work
Time Worked	47% (19 hrs/wk)	55% (22 hrs/wk)
Hourly Earnings	$3.25	$1.97
Fringe Benefits ($ value)	$207	$115
Annual Earnings	$3,177	$2,254
Severity Level	2.40	2.69

There is considerable interest (and some disagreement) concerning the relative merits of supported work and sheltered work programs. Among applicants in The J. M. Foundation's Search for Excellence, clients involved in the average supported work programs are clearly better off in terms of hourly earnings, fringe benefits, and annual earnings. Sheltered employment programs serve clients with more problems and provide persons served with more hours of employment per week. In general, client earnings and fringe benefits are low for both types of programs. Benefits would be greatly increased if clients spent more time working and if hourly wages could be increased for clients in sheltered employment programs.

As was the case in work adjustment, there are wide differences between the highest and lowest ranked supported work and sheltered employment programs. The following table compares the top and bottom quartiles for programs that have been rank ordered using four measures of client benefits.

	Supported Work		Sheltered Work	
Measures	High	Low	High	Low
% Time Worked	64%	26%	61%	48%
Hourly Earnings	$3.96	$2.67	$2.46	$1.44
Fringe Benefits ($ value)	$623	$76	$387	$46
Annual Earnings	$5,881	$1,152	$4,813	$713
Severity Level	2.3	2.5	2.4	3.1

In some instances the better programs obtained benefits *eight* times greater than lower ranked programs. The difference in client severity does not explain why top ranked supported work programs provided benefits so much higher than the top ranked sheltered employment programs.

HOW EFFICIENT ARE THE VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS?

The Foundation's Search for exemplary programs used several input and output measures to assess productivity. Performance on these measures contributed to each applicant's overall excellence score. One productivity measure was the average cost per client day (the annual program budget divided by the number of days clients spent in the program). Other productivity measures determined the number of clients served per staff member, or the number of client hours of paid work produced by each staff hour. The following table compares the median values on these measures of productivity for the four types of programs.

Program	Cost/Client Day	Client/Staff Ratio
Work Adjustment	$33.18	3.4
Skill Training	$37.00	4.2
Supported Work	$28.78	2.0
Sheltered Work	$29.87	3.1

Skill training programs have the highest daily cost, perhaps because they must often use specialized staff, equipment, and supplies. Since very little difference exists between the daily costs per client of the other three vocational programs, the total cost per client served is affected primarily by the number of days spent in the program. Productivity, when measured by the ratio of clients to staff, shows supported work to be the least productive program. However, it also has the lowest daily cost of the four programs. The most productive program on the measure of client/staff ratio is skill training, which produces over four client days of service for every staff day.

Other productivity data was analyzed with surprising results:

- Programs which serve small numbers of clients in relationship to the number of staff do not produce more benefits for their clients than programs which serve many clients with few staff. In fact, programs which were ranked as the most productive (low cost and few staff to clients) also tended to have superior scores on benefits to clients.
- Productivity is just as high in programs which serve clients with severe problems as it is in programs which serve clients with few handicapping conditions. As clearly demonstrated by the best Search applicants, a program can serve persons with severe problems and still be highly productive.

WHAT ABOUT BENEFITS AND COSTS OF VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS?

The following table shows the average cost of obtaining a competitive job entry and the cost of serving a client for both work adjustment and skill training programs. Cost of a job entry was calculated by dividing the total program costs by the number who obtained competitive employment.

Program	Cost/Job Entry	Cost/Person Served	Severity Level
Skill Training	$4,402	$2,457	1.93
Work Adjustment	$11,570	$2,104	1.75

If the severity level of clients is not taken into account, skill training programs are clearly superior in terms of cost per benefit even though they cost more per person served. This superiority is due to their high job entry rate. *In view of the vast difference between the two programs, it is difficult to understand why so few skill training programs are provided by facilities.*

There is widespread belief that the success of a program is greatly affected by the difficulty level of persons served. An analysis of the applications and a review of other research findings shows that in general there is a small relationship between the benefits of programs and the types of persons served that appears to vary according to the type of vocational program. However, this relationship is not strong and in some instances programs ranked high in terms of measured benefits to clients actually served more difficult clients than programs that scored low on client benefits. Thus, serving persons with severe problems only partially explains why some programs obtain relatively few benefits for clients.

Sheltered and supported work programs were also assessed in terms of the cost to achieve client benefits. The following table shows the relationship between client hourly earnings and hourly program costs as well as a measure of program profit and loss (P & L) using a formula of annual program costs minus client annual earnings. The table is based on data which show that annual program costs for each person served in a typical supported work program is $6,128 and for sheltered work it is $6,001. Gross median annual earnings in supported work and sheltered work are $3,177 and $2,254, respectively.

Programs	Hourly Client Earnings Per Dollar of Program Cost	P & L: Cost Minus Yearly Client Earnings
Supported Work	$.45	−$2,951
Sheltered Work	$.34	−$3,747

The previous table is useful because it compares two programs that have similar goals. The data shows that the typical supported work and sheltered work programs both operate with a net loss in that they produce client income (gross earnings) that is less than the programs' cost. This analysis does not, of course, take into account all costs and benefits such as taxes paid, decreases in costs for alternative programs, or the costs of support services provided by other organizations. Nor does it take into account the long-term stability of employment for individuals in either program.

Of the two, supported work produces more financial benefits to clients in relationship to program costs than does sheltered work. However, in both programs the benefits to clients are minimal and the cost of maintaining individuals in these programs is high, especially when continued over many years. In view of client earnings and program costs, it is clear that supported work and sheltered work programs should be used only as a last resort in those situations where an individual is clearly inappropriate for time limited employment programs.

A review of programs rank ordered by "profit and loss" shows that the "best" supported work programs actually earned a yearly "profit" of $1,404 per client served, compared to a "loss" of $292 in the "best" sheltered work programs. However, supported work programs that ranked low on P & L had an average loss of over $12,000 per person served while low ranked sheltered work programs had a negative P & L of just under $8,000. Thus there are substantial differences between good and bad programs, especially in supported work. The best supported work programs are better than the best sheltered programs, but poor performing supported work programs are far worse than the worst sheltered programs.

WHAT DIFFERENCES ARE THERE BETWEEN STATES?

A review of applications showed that some states had more highly ranked programs than other states. Comparisons were made on the percentage of applications that were ranked high and low on overall program excellence. In general, the top quarter of the applications in each program category were ranked "high" and the bottom quarter ranked "low." Of the states submitting ten or more applications, Minnesota, Florida, Texas, and Ohio all had relatively high percentages of superior applications. Minnesota had the highest with 9 of 14 or 64%. The percentage of applications ranked high for the median state was 15%.

At the low end of the continuum, four states sent in a combined total of 54 applications of which only three were rated high. Together, the four best states had 44% of their applications ranked

high while the four lowest states had only 68. While the causes for these differences between states are unknown, it is clear that the benefits that a person obtains from participating in a vocational program does at least partially depend upon the state in which they live.

CONCLUSIONS

The data from the 1986 Search for Excellence demonstrates that there are a number of excellent vocational programs which produce substantial benefits for severely disabled clients at a reasonable cost. The highest performing programs identified in the first annual Search have been described in this publication.

It is also apparent that exemplary programs are not just "slightly" better than other vocational programs. In fact, The J. M. Foundation's Search shows that the highest ranked vocational programs – depending on the measure used – are from *three* to *eight* times better than the lowest ranked programs.

These vast differences in program performance should be a serious concern for clients, advocates, purchasers, and providers of vocational services. This publication is designed to highlight excellence and, more importantly, to encourage all vocational facilities to adopt those practices that will most benefit their clients. There are several important lessons to be learned from The J. M. Foundation National Awards for Excellence in Vocational Programs:

- Excellence can be objectively and reliably measured and programs ranked according to client benefits, program productivity, and the severity level of clients served.
- It is possible to identify exemplary programs on a national basis so that others can better understand how excellence can be achieved.
- The high levels of performance by the nation's "best" programs could be used by all facilities as a target for their own achievement.

There is no one path to becoming an exemplary program, but the top-rated programs in this year's Search share the following characteristics:

- *Good People in Key Positions:* As trite as it may sound, good programs are produced by good people whether they be Trustees who revive a moribund organization, farsighted administrators who overcome seemingly intractable problems, or creative staff who help the most severely disabled clients to obtain employment.

- *Internal Teamwork and External Partnerships:* Exemplary programs operate as a team, both in the facility and in their relationships with the community. Instead of focusing on conflicts, successful facilities work in concert with others toward worthwhile goals so that Board members, administrators, staff, funders, and others share a common vision to meet the needs of the community and the clients that are served. By working cooperatively, exemplary facilities are able to accomplish goals which others are unable to achieve.
- *A Concern for Excellence:* Each award winning facility aggressively and consciously pursues excellence by establishing demanding goals and developing thoughtful strategic plans, allocating scarce resources to improve the quality of existing services, creating new and exciting programs, and providing the community with information concerning facility goals and how well they are achieved. In effect, exemplary facilities are committed to excellence in everything they do.

More than ever before, providers of human services recognize the need to be competitive. Private philanthropy and individual giving are at an all time high, but three items; defense, Social Security, and debt service now consume nearly two-thirds of our "trillion dollar" Federal budget. Thus, local communities as well as public and private funding sources are challenging providers to serve those most in need, obtain more benefits for their clients, and "hold the line" on increasing costs.

Data from the first annual Search for Excellence reveals that excellence is a scarce commodity in vocational programs and that persons with disabilities obtain benefits which are largely dependent on which facility happens to serve them. To successfully compete for scarce resources, vocational facilities, like other providers of human services, must first ensure their own houses are in order. *Those who wish to serve the disabled must understand what excellence is and make a commitment to achieve it.*

While the winners and finalists in the 1986 Search achieve excellence in different ways, they share a common bond by providing exemplary services to their clients and the community. It is our hope that this document will encourage vocational professionals across the nation to learn from the best, dedicating themselves to achieving excellence and becoming the next generation of exemplary providers in The J. M. Foundation's Search for Excellence.

THE 1987 J. M. FOUNDATION SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE

In 1987 The J. M. Foundation will be seeking applications from both public and private organizations that provide vocational programs to persons with disabilities. Award winners will receive $20,000 from The J. M. Foundation and will be featured in a nationally distributed publication.

One winner will be selected in each of four program categories. In addition, organizations that are finalists in each category may also be recognized for their achievement. The Search for Excellence program categories for 1987 are:

- *Community-Based Work Adjustment:* Time-limited programs that provide work experience and other services at community work sites to assist persons with poor work habits, motivational problems, and low productivity to obtain competitive employment.
- *Consortium-Based Transition:* Programs that involve multiple organizations providing comprehensive services to youth with major disabilities who need assistance in bridging the gap between school and work.
- *Supported Work in Small Communities:* These programs in communities of under 100,000 population provide supportive services to persons with disabilities, enabling them to earn an income on work sites in the community.
- *Work Services for the Severely Disabled:* Facility-based programs that provide severely disabled persons with an opportunity to earn an income within sheltered settings.

Applications for this year's Search for Excellence will be distributed by The J. M. Foundation in April, 1987. Organizations that have not received application materials by May 30, 1987 should write or call:

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Minneapolis, MN 55403
Telephone: (612) 870-4420

ABOUT THE J. M. FOUNDATION

"What finer purpose is there for time, effort and knowledge than to do our best in restoring what God intended for man and disability has taken away."

JEREMIAH MILBANK
1887-1972

Born to one of America's leading philanthropic families, Jeremiah Milbank (1887-1972) created The J. M. Foundation in 1924 to enhance the nation's health, rehabilitation, and educational services. From a first-year payout of $61,500, annual disbursements have steadily increased to the current level of over $31.0 million per year.

The J. M. Foundation grants program encompasses several related fields such as: rehabilitation of the physically disabled; prevention and wellness, with an emphasis on individual responsibility for health; expansion of effective extramural care; health-related public policy research; alcoholism and drug abuse; and selected projects in biomedical research and medical education.

Through grants to educational projects and public policy research, the Foundation strives to preserve the values which have so benefitted our society: free enterprise, individual liberty, private initiative, and limited government.

In addition, The J. M. Foundation Directors recognize that our nation's future depends on the strength of the American family. Accordingly, we support organizations that enhance the quality of family life and provide today's youth with meaningful life experiences, productive employment opportunities, healthy lifestyles, and positive character development.

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50